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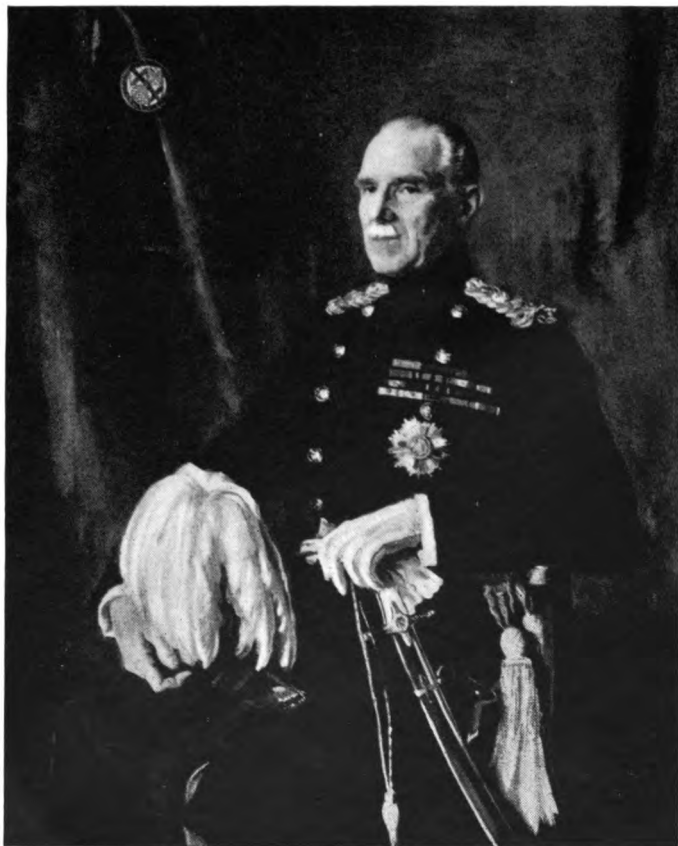


# **A SOLDIER'S SAGA**









General Sir Aylmer Haldane, by Oswald Birley.

[*Frontispiece.*

# A SOLDIER'S SAGA

## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

### GENERAL SIR AYLMER HALDANE

G.C.M.G., K.C.B., D.S.O.

NOTE.—I am indebted to Brigadier-General Sir JAMES EDMONDS, Official Historian of the War of 1914-18, for having read and made suggestions on the story that follows

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS WHICH INCLUDE  
SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR*

William Blackwood & Sons Ltd.  
Edinburgh and London  
1948



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**TO**  
**THE MEMORY OF MY BELOVED SISTER**  
**ALICE—A TRUE FRIEND**



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## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY DAYS.

THERE was much rejoicing at 14 Stafford Street, Edinburgh, where my parents and their young family were living, when I appeared on the scene on the 17th November 1862. Four girls had preceded me, and the arrival of a brother seems to have been hailed as a popular event, for one of my sisters, then four years old, heralded it by racing through the house in a state of wild excitement shouting, "Unto us a son is born," thereby bringing on her diminutive head the vials of wrath of her nurse.

As the family grew, for another girl followed me seventeen months later, the house we occupied proved to be too small, and my father, who had inherited a legacy from his uncle, Robert Rutherford, bought 22 Charlotte Square, whither we moved in 1867.

At this point I must state that I do not propose, as is sometimes the case in autobiographies and records of that nature, to carry back my story generation after generation to the most remote among my forebears, some of whom in their day were not undistinguished, and, except as regards the more immediate members of my family with some of whom I came in touch, I shall allude only to those on whose tracks I have alighted in my travels at home or abroad. I might run through the whole gamut of them from the days of King William the Lion, in whose suite was one, Brien, the earliest known of my line, but to do so would probably bore the normal reader. Indeed, this would be little more than a roll of Haldanes from the period when they were not blessed with a surname, of whose characteristics and those of their wives so little is known that it would be impossible to state with certainty how far the present writer had inherited their good or evil qualities.

Of my immediate predecessors I may say that my father was one of a family of fifteen, being the fourth surviving son



and tenth child of my grandfather, James Alexander Haldane, and the eldest son by his second wife, Margaret Harriet, daughter of Daniel Rutherford, Professor of Botany in the University of Edinburgh (who discovered nitrogen), by Anne Mackay of the Reay family. The Rutherfords came of ancient Border stock, and Margaret was a first cousin of Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford and of General Sir James Russell of Ashiestiel in Selkirkshire. Through the connection with the Russells I inherited many years later their beautiful estate on the Tweed, where they had been settled for two hundred years. It was there that Sir Walter Scott, when Sheriff of the County, resided for seven years, while his cousin, the general, was serving in India, and there also he wrote 'Marmion' and part of 'Waverley.'

As a young man, my father had much distinguished himself at the High School, then the principal seat of learning for the youth of Edinburgh, and later at the University. Among my possessions I prized several gold medals which he had won for scholarship; but, sad to say, these relics, as well as my own war decorations and medals, those of Sir James Russell, and some interesting miniature portraits, were destroyed during an air-raid on London in February 1944.

My mother, who, like the wives of my father and his three brothers, hailed from the southern kingdom, was the only daughter of James Lowthorpe of Welton Hall in the East Riding of Yorkshire, where her family had for long been settled.

It is difficult when writing of the past to be sure of what are undeniably one's own recollections and what come from extraneous sources, and the further one carries back memories the more likely it is to confuse the one with the other. Of one thing I am, however, certain, and that my earliest recollection. This takes me back to the date when I parted with my golden locks, which were removed at the establishment of Messrs Pass, then the principal barbers in Edinburgh. The operation took place on the 13th October 1865, when I was about a month short of my third birthday, and I recall that the loss caused me some grief, which was possibly tempered by the knowledge that their removal had brought me one step nearer manhood.

Four years later I was sent to a day school in George Street near my home, an establishment which was kept by

two maiden ladies, where the boys and girls were co-educated in two or three classes. Whether it was due to this admixture I cannot say, but I lost my heart to one of the opposite sex, and my sisters, who knew the object of my attraction, prepared a proposal to her in writing which I had not the courage to present.

A year or two later I was transferred to a boys' school in India Street, at the head of which was a very kindly man, Mr Henderson, and there I remained till 1875.

As the years go by, one of the things that strike one regarding present-day children is that they never seem to lack the wherewithal to purchase sweets and ice-cream. In my youth, in Scotland at any rate, chocolates were something of a treat and not readily come by; but nowadays, wherever one goes, children may be seen consuming either them or other sweetmeats, and almost every other shop offers such articles for sale. Whether the young people of this country are the better for so indulging is a question for doctors and dentists, but the consumption of such quantities of carbohydrates must surely tend to dull the appetite for more wholesome and nutritious foods.

A custom of my early days which seems almost to have died out—a fact, on the whole, not to be regretted—but which lasted in India longer than at home, was that at dinner-parties, after the guests had adjourned to the drawing-room, some of them who had brought their musical scores, or may not have done so, should entertain the company with instrumental pieces and songs sentimental or comical, and sometimes with recitations. I was never anything but a mediocre performer in a musical sense, not having inherited my mother's talent in that direction; but when I became aide-de-camp, aspiring to fulfil to the best of my power the social as well as the military duties of that post, and stimulated by the wife of my general, a lady with a fine contralto voice, I had singing lessons when on leave, and occasionally at Simla did my part with the more finished performers. My songs were mainly those composed by Tosti, Maude Valerie White, and Guy d'Hardelot, from which it may be inferred that my tendency leaned towards the sentimental.

But I had a much earlier experience of the musical world when, at one of our dinner-parties at Edinburgh, I appeared

among the guests dressed in a black velveteen suit. After the proceedings had been opened by my sisters singing a part-song, I was called to take my share, so, climbing on to the music-stool with my score in front of me, I burst into my last-learned and then favourite tune of Handel's "Dead March in Saul"! I can still conjure up the looks on the faces of the company when my performance came to an end, and the congratulations mingled with laughter, the cause of which my innocent mind was at a loss to comprehend.

At these entertainments the wine principally drunk was claret, which had not then been replaced by champagne, only a small proportion of which was consumed. My father's wine-cellar was held in high repute among his friends, and I recollect hearing one of his guests who had indulged freely remark that there was not "a headache in a skinful"—a fact which, judging by the quantity consumed, he had striven to prove. But the red wine of France was giving place to champagne, and I recall his disappointment when any of my brother officers who were his guests showed their preference for the sparkling beverage.

Those were the days when Newhaven fishwives, in their blue serge raiment with striped petticoats, bearing on their shoulders a heavy creel laden with a fresh catch, might be seen toiling up the steep streets on their way to the residential parts of Edinburgh; and I have seen at a ball supper one of them in appropriate garb busily engaged in opening oysters for the benefit of the guests.

A few doors from where my family lived was the house of an elder brother of my father, the progenitor of Viscount Haldane of Cloan. My sisters and I used at times to visit our cousins in Perthshire, who, like ourselves, until the premature death of one of them, were five in number.

Cloan is about three miles along the northern side of the Ochils from Gleneagles—a name which has been unwarrantably usurped by a great railway company for their luxury hotel—the ancient home of the Haldane family, and for a number of years afterwards in the hands of our kinsman, Lord Camperdown, whose ancestress was my great-great-aunt Helen, a daughter of John Haldane of Gleneagles, a member of both the last Scottish and first Union Parliaments. In the family this John is known as "Union Jack," and like other Haldanes



John Haldane of Gleneagles, M.P., by Wm. Aikman.  
(" Union Jack," 1660-1721.)

*[To face p. 4.]*



he had shared in his country's battles, being present with the Perthshire Horse at Killiecrankie, where he fought on the Government side.

We saw a good deal of our Cloan cousins, for we were, and are, a family with a strong clan feeling, which with advancing years has grown stronger. On the first occasion that I went to Cloan I travelled with my Uncle Robert and his youngest son (now Sir William Haldane), and as the train passed Stirling Castle he pointed out to me the Heading Hill—an ominous name—on a lower slope of the eminence on which the stronghold stands. He told me how one of my ancestors, on the female side, the octogenarian Duncan, eighth Earl of Lennox, had been beheaded there in 1425. This information conveyed little to my mind, unless it was that I felt rather horrified at having had a forebear with criminal propensities; but when many years later I learned the full story of the tragedy I regarded what he had said in a very different light.

Long after I had retired from the Army and wrote the story of the Haldane family, I devoted a chapter to what is part of the history of Scotland. It must have created a stir from one end of the country to the other, and terminated with the loss to my family of the Earldom of Lennox and what has been termed the partition of the district of that name. As this partition of a territory which stretched from Forth to Clyde and comprised two hundred and twenty-eight square miles had a considerable influence on the fortunes of my family, I feel that it will not be out of place to refer briefly to it in these pages.

The story relates to the tragic fate of the last of the Celtic Earls of Lennox, whose genealogy dated back to the middle of the twelfth century. This fate was shared by his son-in-law, Murdoch, Duke of Albany, the cousin of James I., and his two grandsons, Walter and Alexander, all of whom were summarily beheaded on a trumped-up charge of treason and forfeited their heads, lands, and titles.

How this came about was as follows: the Duke of Albany, ex-Governor of Scotland, was descended from Elizabeth Mure, first queen of Robert II., while his half-brother, Walter, Earl of Atholl, was the issue of his second queen, Euphemia, daughter of Hugh, Earl of Ross. This Walter, blinded by ambition, was the first on the assize (jury) of the trial of these distin-

guished nobles, and sought on a suborned charge to eliminate the stock of Robert's earlier queen, completing his devastating career by the murder of King James at the Blackfriars Monastery in Perth.

Earl Duncan left three daughters, his heiresses but for the forfeiture. The eldest, Isabella, was married to Murdoch, Duke of Albany, and two of their sons, both of the blood royal, perished with their father and grandfather. James, the remaining son, fled to Ireland, and had issue seven illegitimate sons, none of whom on account of the flaw in his birth could succeed to the Earldom of Lennox. But while the issue of Isabella, Duchess of Albany, thus failed, Duncan's two remaining daughters, Margaret and Elizabeth, were represented by grandchildren: Margaret and Elizabeth Menteith, the former married to John Haldane of Gleneagles, the latter to John Napier of Merchiston; while Elizabeth, Duncan's third daughter, was represented by John, Lord Darnley, whose descendant married Mary, Queen of Scots.

What the opinion of the Crown was as to the rightful claimant to the earldom is apparent; for there remains on perpetual record in the original volume of the 'Great Seal of Scotland' (vol. vii., No. 229), under date 8th March 1473, the grant by the Crown to John Haldane of a quarter of the Earldom of Lennox as "first and principal person of the Earldom." The charter proceeds to state in a regulative clause that "he and his heirs are to possess and hold the Earldom as Duncan, last Earl and his predecessors held it in past times from the predecessors of James III."

Such is in brief the tale of the association of the Haldanes with the Earldom of Lennox, which, in spite of the Crown charter, ended in a compromise whereby Sir John Haldane was ousted from his rights in favour of the more powerful house of Stewart of Darnley.

After the compromise which led to the Haldanes and Napiers acquiring each a fourth share of the Lennox territory, the claim to the earldom was dropped; but the record in the Great Seal Register still stands and no attempt has since been made to reverse an agreement which was brought about by *force majeure*.

It is possible that, in the days when the rival claimants were in dispute, had John Haldane and his son James con-

tinued obstinately to oppose the Darnleys, they could have done so only at the peril of their lives. Yet the position of the Haldanes would seem to have been a strong one, for Sir John had held the important office of Lord Justice General "benorth the Forth," and that of Master of the Household of King James III., and had at one time been ambassador to France and Denmark. It was then, during his absence from Scotland, that Lord Darnley usurped the title of Earl of Lennox, a high-handed proceeding which was revoked when Sir John returned home; and not until thirteen years later was it again assumed by him.

Before leaving the subject of Stirling I may mention that the Haldanes had several other connections with the castle besides that relating to the Lennox title. Two of them were constables of the stronghold; and another, Sir James, was associated in 1545 with his brother-in-law, Lord Erskine, his cousin, William, second Earl of Montrose, and others in safeguarding the young Queen Mary within its walls from the matrimonial designs of Henry VIII.; while two others took part in the "Raid of Stirling" in 1585, one of whom was killed in the streets of the city. Lastly, within view of the castle, two Haldanes, William and Sir Simon, adherents of King Robert the Bruce, as were also their kinsmen on the southern border of the kingdom, fought under his banner at Bannockburn.



## CHAPTER II.

### SCHOOL DAYS.

I REMAINED, as I have said, at Mr Henderson's school until 1875, when I joined the Edinburgh Academy, where four of my Cloan cousins had been or were at the same time as myself. While there, during the winter season, when the snow lay thick on the ground, the boys had sometimes to fight their way into the schoolyard, as on the opposite side of the road there was a board school with the lads of which we were at enmity; and I was glad to pick up some boy older than myself who could assist me in getting through the rough and tumble at the gate, whence our comrades made sorties with the same object. My most frequent and welcome source of protection was Bob Younger (Lord Blanesborough), kindest of men, two of whose elder brothers were or had been at the Academy.

During the four and a half years I was there the head of my class was James Avon Clyde, who distinguished himself at the Scottish Bar and rose to be Lord Chief Justice. Young Clyde was a clever, hard-working boy, whose father was the master of one of the classes, the instruction in which was mainly classical. The son was good looking, gifted with a charming manner, and not intolerant of those less well mentally equipped than himself. Though not one of my intimates, we were always on friendly terms, and perhaps both of us in our respective professions of sword and gown have gone further than anyone else of the class of some sixty boys in which we were together.

My great friend in those days was Alexander Chancellor Mosman, whose father had a property in Lanarkshire and had served in the 13th Hussars. The ex-hussar had strong religious convictions, which I do not think his three sons shared in an equal degree, though they had inherited his love of horses. At certain seasons they were required to attend the prayer meetings and children's services which were held on

Saturdays in the Free Church Assembly Hall, near the top of the Mound. Though my memory of these gatherings is now somewhat vague, I am sure that they were conducive to a good deal of suppressed hilarity; and I particularly recollect a visit paid to Edinburgh by Messrs Moody and Sankey, the American religious revivalists, at which the Mosman family and I appeared in force. No doubt we helped to make the welkin resound with our youthful trebles when the audience, to the accompaniment of the harmonium played by Ira D. Sankey, burst into one of the somewhat emotional hymns which formed the principal part of the proceedings.

Happening to pass recently the building where these assemblies used to be held, memories of the past led me to enter the courtyard, where a caretaker was busy with his broom. In course of conversation he drew my attention to a more than life-size statue of John Knox, which faces the entrance door of the hall. He told me that a few months earlier a meeting had been held there to protest against the brutality with which the Jews were being treated by the Nazis; and he added with a laugh that as the assembly was leaving the building the eyes of many of them were raised to the bronze figure of the great reformer, whose attitude, with outstretched arm, seemed to express sympathy with the Führer rather than with the victims on whose account the meeting had been held.

In those early days one of the greatest annual excitements of my sisters and I was when our parents took us to see the Christmas pantomime at the Theatre Royal; and not until some years later do I remember being present at a regular play. One of the first of them must have been at the time of a visit of Henry Irving and his company, when, having scraped together sufficient pence to make a shilling, which was the price of admission to the "gods," as the topmost gallery was called, I went with a companion to an evening performance. The night was warm and we were well below the level of the shoulders of the crowd which thronged the long flight of stairs that led to where we hoped to get seats, and but for the help of the captain of the rugby football team of our school—who recognised us and seemed to be a very big man in more senses than one—we should never have got there alive. As it was, the pressure from below was so over-

powering that, until the opening of the entrance door at the head of the stairway which caused some relief, several men fainted and their inanimate bodies were passed overhead from hand to hand—a spectacle calculated to shake the nerves of those of riper years than a couple of schoolboys. When at last, helped as I have said by our schoolmate, and after a free fight, we managed to reach the front row of the gallery, we were not too exhausted to enjoy the pathetic play of 'Charles I.,' which was followed, I think, by the thrilling representation of 'The Bells.' The next play I witnessed other than a pantomime was 'Trial by Jury,' by Gilbert and Sullivan, and thereafter my theatrical memories, through more frequent experiences, are no longer clear.

When the summer came round the holidays were spent at different places, mostly at the seaside, and twice we were taken to Scarborough, of which my mother, being a Yorkshirewoman, was particularly fond. The journey there seemed long, and some of the passengers' luggage was carried on the roofs of the carriages, whence on arrival it was slid on to the platform.

But the place which we children preferred above all others was Winterfield House, near Dunbar. Here we had everything that could delight the hearts of children, and, besides friends in the vicinity, had generally companions of my own or my sisters' school.

As I was fond of sea-fishing I spent many an hour with a rod at the mouth of the picturesque harbour, unconscious of the fact that one of my ancestors had been a keeper of the historic royal castle which commanded its narrow entrance in the reign of King James III., as also a page in the royal household in earlier years, while another of my name was deputy keeper in the time of that monarch's grandson.

In my youth the harbour presented a busy scene during the herring fishing season, when at times it was so crowded with smacks that one might have crossed from one side to the other by stepping from boat to boat. Now, however, owing to the depredations of trawlers and the vagaries of the herrings, it is practically deserted.

Besides sea-fishing there were to be found trout up to a pound weight in some of the burns in the neighbourhood, and one of the first specimens I landed was hooked in the

Broxburn, a stream which runs through Broxmouth Park, close to the battle-ground where the "dismal route of Dunbar," as the Scottish historian Balfour terms it, took place on 3rd September 1650. In this battle another and much later of my ancestors, Colonel Sir John Haldane of Gleneagles, was among the "men of notte" who fell; while distant some thirty miles to the south there perished at the disastrous field of Flodden in 1513 another Sir John Haldane of Gleneagles, who, as one of our charters states, "died on the field of battle at Northumberland guarding the King's royal person."

But to turn from these memories of the past and come to later years, the landlord from whom my father rented Winterfield was a gentleman farmer, William Rennie, who had a long lease of some of the best arable land on the estate of the Duke of Roxburghe in East Lothian. He was a kinsman of Sir John Rennie, the famous bridge builder, and he told us that his family had migrated from Cornwall to Scotland many years earlier than the days of which I write. Be that as it may, our landlord certainly possessed some of the attributes of the most westerly county of England, if one may judge by his stature and massive proportions; and the shoes he wore were not much less in size than some I noticed in 1897 when, in company with General "Chinese" Gordon's nephew of the Royal Engineers, I visited the arsenal at Cairo, where they were kept in store for the abnormally large-footed Sudanese troops.

The greatest pleasure of my sisters and myself was to spend the day at Oxwell Mains, where the farmyard, the livestock, and the games with the farm children gave us inexhaustible delight. When the harvest was being gathered the food provided for the reapers, many of whom came from Ireland, was a matter of interest to us. The huge beakers, or "bickers" as they were called, of coarse porridge, the monumental baps, and the quantities of home-brewed ale which were consumed and which, when unobserved, we would suck up through straws, would astonish our youthful minds; for eating always seems to have a special interest for children, though gastronomy, as I was to learn later, is by no means confined to the young.

Winterfield possessed a garden of over an acre in extent—for us young folks a veritable Garden of Eden. The door

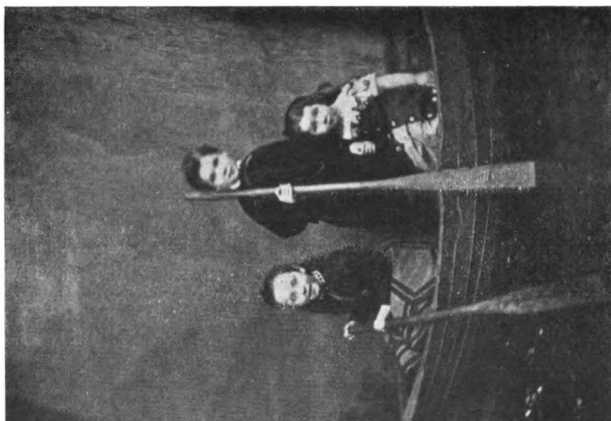
into it was kept locked when the gardener was not at work, to prevent us or others from making raids on the apple and other fruit trees. This precaution had the natural effect of whetting our appetites for the forbidden fruits, and though the wall surrounding the garden was smooth and some ten feet high we were able by the aid of a pear tree whose branches were trained along the outside of it to climb over whenever the predatory spirit moved us.

I recall one day when my sister Alice and I gained access by means of the said pear tree and hastily crammed a basket with ripe apples. In order to remove the booty to a safe place it was decided that I should mount to the top of the wall and by hooking the handle of a hoe through that of the basket haul the weighty receptacle to where I stood, while my sister pushed it up as high as she could. With some difficulty I did my share of the work, but so heavily was the basket laden that I was obliged to lean backwards to get the necessary leverage. Suddenly the handle slipped off the hoe, and in an instant I found myself on my back on the ground, the basket tumbling on to my sister's head and knocking her down. A few moments passed, when as I lay on the turf at the base of the wall I saw my sister's face peering over the top of the wall looking down at me, for she had managed to clamber up to see what had happened. I had had, I imagine, a narrow escape from injuring my spine and felt wrathful when she began laughing, for she had not at once realised with what force the ground and I had met ; but she quickly descended and pulled me on to my legs. I was feeling very sick, but managed to get through the evening till bedtime arrived, fortified by the knowledge that discovery would bring not only corporal punishment but effectually put a stop to further raids on the place where every tree was "pleasant to the sight and good for food."

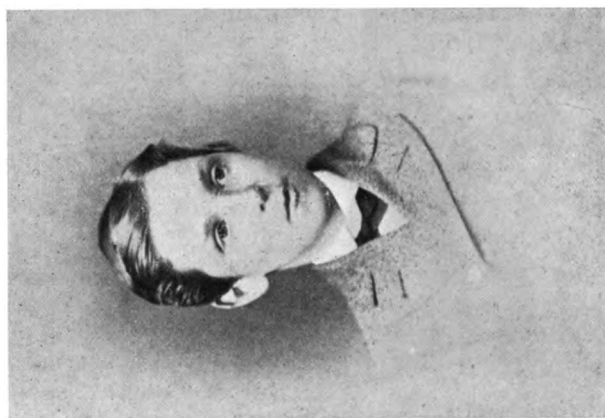
This same sister, who was next above me in age, then and always was my particular pal, and whether or not from kinship with Sir Walter Scott, possessed in some degree that great story-teller's power ; for she used to thrill my youngest sister and me with imaginary tales of adventure, the interest of which was enhanced through our being allowed to play a rôle among the *dramatis personæ*.

While at Dunbar, a favourite resort of ours, when we





Myself and my sisters Alice and Anne.



Myself, about twelve years old.

[To face p. 13.

could get to it for it was not within easy reach, was the romantically situated Tantallon Castle, the stronghold of the Red Douglas, which is so vividly described in 'Marmion.' For long it stood unrepaired and much as it was after Cromwell had battered with cannon its massive walls when he arrived in its vicinity after his victory at Dunbar. In our day it was not possible, try as we would, to climb to the highest point of the ruin by means of the circular staircases, for there were many gaps; and the dark dungeon in which one of my ancestors was immured in the fifteenth century prior to being beheaded had not been discovered. Once, after picnicking at the castle, we crossed in a small boat to the precipitous Bass Rock, which some years later was to acquire greater interest through the publication of Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Catriona.'

One of the summers spent at Winterfield, I think the first, was that of the Franco-Prussian War, which is recalled to me mainly through the panorama (the precursor of the cinema) which we were taken to see at Edinburgh. I can still remember three or four of these moving or rather slowly wound-up pictures—one of the Emperor of the French and the Prince Imperial leaving for the front from the little railway station of St Cloud; another of an infuriated French matron upsetting from a high-up window a tub full of boiling liquid on the heads of some Prussian infantry who were strutting arrogantly along the street below; and a third depicting a mined railway bridge being blown sky-high.

In those days much less attention was paid to hygiene than at the present time, as is evident from the fact that we children and our elders were kept busy tearing up into long strips old sheets which would find their way to serve as bandages in the ill-equipped French hospitals.

Our sympathies lay strongly on the side of our neighbours across the Channel, perhaps as regards myself because I had a friend, a boy named Havet, whose father was professor of French and who was the proud possessor of a toy *mitrailleuse*, the forerunner of the machine-gun.

Another place which we several times visited during the summer was Birnam, where my mother had an old school friend. The father of the latter told me one day that his father had at one time been Governor of Perth jail and, in



order to assist Thomas Graham (later Lord Lynedoch) to muster sufficient men to provide him with a company of infantry at the time of the Peninsular War, had emptied that establishment of enough malefactors to make up the required quota.

At Birnam Lord John Manners and his family were near us at St Mary's Tower, but I can recollect none of the family except Cecil, who one day caused a good deal of excitement by getting lost.

Another place where I passed several weeks each summer was Glenturret, near my kinsmen the Murrays of Ochtertyre, a shooting lodge seven miles from Crieff. This place had special attractions for me and my elder sisters, and there I spent many twelfths of August and brought down my first grouse with the gun which my father had given me. In those days, and I refer to the 'seventies, there was little grouse driving in Scotland, most of the shooting being done over dogs, a far more interesting form of that sport, although no doubt a good deal less productive of heavy bags. Nevertheless, it was not uncommon at Glenturret for four guns—one of whom, the youthful son of my host, carried a muzzle-loader—to bring down on the twelfth one hundred brace, a bag far exceeded in later years when the moor had changed hands and was being driven.

I remember on one occasion when one of the shooters killed four grouse in two consecutive shots—I imagine rather an unusual instance of crossing birds. On another occasion I recall the head keeper, a dour Scot, using strong language when a youthful guest fired into the brown and brought down five birds with a single shot. In Ireland, when shooting some years later at Glenarm Castle, the keeper reproached me for killing only two birds out of a covey when by firing both barrels into the middle of it I might have secured half a dozen. But the birds in that country were not so thick on the ground as in Scotland, and longish distances had to be traversed to where the setters were pointing to a covey, which made sport there more fatiguing.

Like all the Haldanes, male and female, I was fond of long walks, which, unlike motoring, have the advantage of strengthening one's bump of locality and impressing the features of the country on one's memory. Many lengthy perambulations did

I take with my father, who thought little of covering in a day the forty miles between Edinburgh and Glasgow; and one summer, that of 1893, I walked from Pontresina in the Engadine to Chur—not taking advantage of the many short-cuts at the hair-pin turns—a distance of fifty miles, by no means on the level.

I took ten hours, heel and toe, or twelve in all if I add two for halts for refreshments. I started from the Roseg Hotel at the same time as the diligence—the vehicle in Switzerland of those days—on which rode a friend. At first, on the downhill run to Samaden, I was left hopelessly in the rear, but, like the tortoise of the fable, I toiled on until I passed him on the long rise on the Albula road, and had got so far ahead that I had just finished lunch at Tiefencastel, about halfway to my destination, when up rumbled the ponderous chariot and I received a cheer from the outside passengers, who were aware of my ambition to reach Chur before them. I lost not a moment in pushing on, anxious not to lose the lead I had gained, and eventually reached the Steinbok Hotel at the terminus of the railway only a few yards in advance of my friend, who came thundering up in my rear.

But to revert to earlier days, I have so far said nothing as to the lines on which my sisters and I were brought up by our parents. They were strict and followed those which are typified in Mrs Sherwood's 'Fairchild Family,' a smug, middle-class household, which we young ones held in abhorrence. My father did not interfere in our upbringing, so far as I noticed, but when I went to school he took an interest in my studies, regretting no doubt that my progress was much less rapid than his own at the same age, and, while urging me to work hard, impressed on me the importance of accuracy and avoiding anything of a slipshod nature.

My mother and her two brothers had been brought up by a married aunt who was, I imagine, narrow-minded and in religion evangelical, and, having had no children of her own, lacked knowledge of the proper treatment of the young. Corporal punishment, inflicted for trivial peccadilloes and sometimes when it was felt to be unmerited, was the order of the day with us, and this had the effect of arousing resentment. Children in modern times seem to be brought up in a more sensible way, though there may be a tendency to

excessive leniency ; and perhaps they are in consequence of less hardy stuff than those of my youth of necessity were. As I look back on my early days I come to the conclusion that, in spite of what Solomon said, the rod as an instrument of correction for children of tender age is unsuitable, tends to estrange them from their parents who should be their confidants in time of trouble, and, worse still, is apt to make them through fear of punishment untruthful and engender in them what is nowadays aptly called an inferiority complex, which is difficult to get rid of.

As the years passed and what I went through became obliterated from memory, I came to know my mother as one devoted to her children—wise, generous, and altogether lovable ; and her sudden death at the age of seventy-eight created a blank in the lives of myself and my sisters which nothing could ever fill. I must have caused her infinite anxiety during the five occasions in her life-time when I was on active service ; but she was a brave woman and never betrayed what she must have felt, and nothing would have induced her to stand between me and any prospect of advancement in my career which offered itself.

My father died many years earlier, when I was twenty-five, and, though not a friend as a parent nearer my age might have been, I am glad to know that he never regretted my having become a soldier—a profession in which I was making good progress at the time of his death ; and he certainly showed no regret that I had not followed his own.

### CHAPTER III.

#### CHOICE OF A PROFESSION—WIMBLEDON SCHOOL.

SOME years after the period of which I have been writing I conceived the idea of entering the Navy, probably through my friendship with Norman Macalister, a cadet on the *Britannia*, and also through knowing Captain Bedingfeld, who commanded the guardship at Queensferry. But my parents gave me no encouragement, and I am thankful that they remained firm, for, though I did not know it, I was not and never was what is called "a good sailor."

A little later, when I had given up all thought of a naval career and was working for the sister service, I elected at the end of a school term to return home from London to Leith by sea, an experience which was to prove how unfitted I was for a life on the ocean wave. The ship on which I sailed from Irongate wharf was small, the sea rough, and I did not leave the cabin from the time we were outside the Thames estuary till we were alongside the quay at our destination. Here, wet and hungry, I vowed that in future I would, as far as possible, eschew travel by water; and though it has been my fate to make many voyages since that first ill-starred experience I have never acquired the least liking for the sea or even for the seaside. A cause of particular annoyance on this occasion was that before sailing I had unwisely paid in advance an inclusive charge for my meals during the voyage. Had the weather been fine I should probably have gained pecuniarily by this arrangement, but the contrary proved to be the case, for I could touch no food between Tilbury and Leith.

Before I went to school in England I had no definite idea on the question of the profession I should adopt. My sisters had, however, determined that I must be a soldier, encouraged by a friend of my mother who had had a brother in the 92nd Highlanders and another who commanded the 28th Regiment. The idea was not distasteful to me, as my military aspirations

had already been stimulated by reading several of Charles Lever's works, as well as others by James Grant. Edinburgh, however, did not provide the best means of passing the entrance examination for either Woolwich or Sandhurst. At this juncture one of my cousins, a wrangler at Cambridge, then at the Bar and later Master of the Percy Hounds, came to the rescue and suggested that I should be sent to Wimbledon School. This establishment, which long ago ceased to exist, was conducted by two clergymen, Messrs Brackenbury and Wynne, who undertook the preparation of boys, mostly from public schools, for the entrance examination for the Army.

My fate having been decided, my father and I left Edinburgh in September 1878 by the Midland Railway. We travelled by night in a car not unlike those which at the present day run on the United States railways, for at that time I do not think that sleeping cars with separate berths existed on our lines. This journey was the most luxurious that I enjoyed for many a day, my usual method of travel, except for the one unforgettable sea journey which I have already described, being third class; and many a bitterly cold night have I spent in winter in compartments only heated, and then quite inadequately, by hot-water cans. On one occasion, an extremely cold December night when there were many degrees of frost, I arrived home for the Christmas holidays more dead than alive, for shortly after leaving King's Cross in a corner seat facing the engine, the window on my side of the compartment got smashed to atoms through the door being banged, and hot-water cans could not be obtained for love or money to minimise the discomfort of the passengers, nor was there to be found a single place vacant in any other carriage on the train.

On another occasion—the Thames was frozen that winter—I arrived at King's Cross to find that the whole metropolis was several feet deep in snow, and, as no cabs were able to ply, I was fortunate to be able to make my way by underground and over Hungerford Bridge to Waterloo Station, taking with me a handbag and leaving the rest of my baggage to follow next day.

But coming back to the year when I joined Wimbledon School my father did his best to make my first visit to London agreeable, though I fear that what amused me must have

bored him, and after a day or two we went to the place where I was to pass the next three years of my life. The food we were given there was quite insufficient judged by what I have observed young people of both sexes can consume in the present day, and the two Harrow boys with whom I shared a room, into which we were locked at night, effectually bred in me a dislike of that school which I have never overcome.

On Saturdays part of our frugal repast consisted of rice pudding, a plate of which was set before each boy, but was not eaten. However, on the first Saturday after my arrival, though I had been warned that this delicacy was taboo, feeling famished and far from satisfied with the scrap of sinewy meat which had preceded it, I attacked the pudding without hesitation. My action called forth protests from my neighbours, but I continued to devour the contents of my plate, and after a few Saturdays others plucked up courage and followed my example, with the result that a day came when there was not enough to go round owing to the unexpectedly large number of partakers.

Soon after I went to Wimbledon my cousin Richard (later Viscount Haldane of Cloan) invited me and another cousin who was at the Charterhouse to spend a Saturday in town with him. Richard was then at the English Bar, and on joining him at the now non-existent Junior Athenæum Club, of which he was a member, we went first to his chambers in Lincoln's Inn and thence to the Old Bailey, where for a short time we listened to a case which was being tried by Mr Justice Hawkins. After lunch at the "Cheshire Cheese" in Fleet Street, where we occupied the same bench as that on which Dr Johnson of old used to sit, we adjourned to the Tower. On arriving at the entrance it was found that we were too late to be admitted; but my astute legal relative was equal to the occasion, and, having perceived that the beef-eater on duty was a "brither Scot," caused him to suppose that we were strangers to the metropolis newly arrived from north of the Tweed, which led to our being admitted without trouble, some silver having been passed in the process.

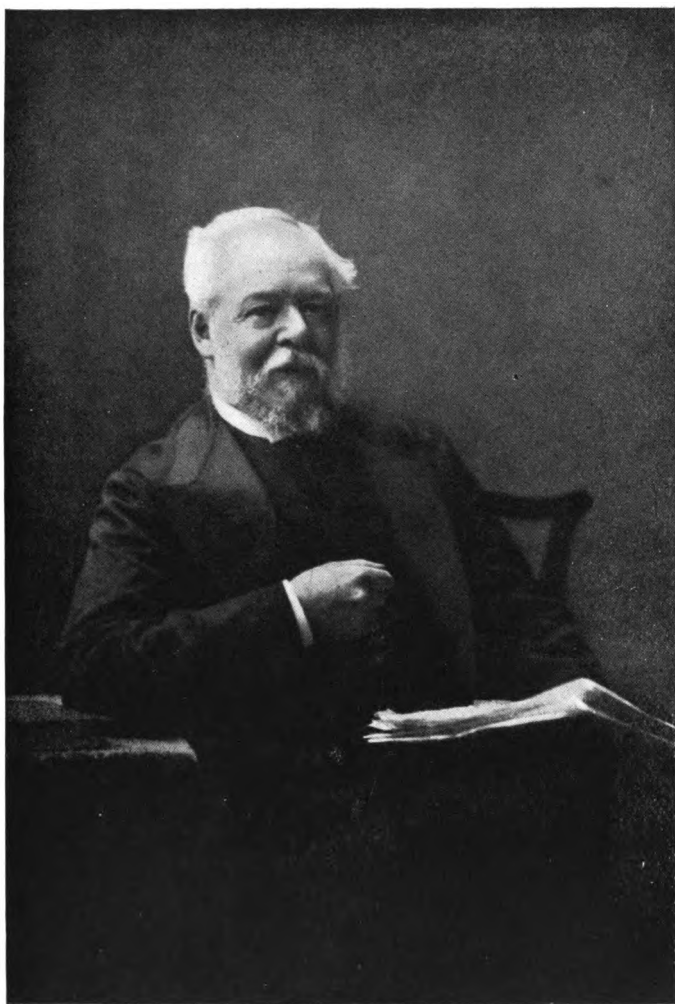
In the summer of 1880 I presented myself for the Woolwich examination, which that year was held in the Albert Hall. On this occasion there were for competition eighty vacancies, instead of the usual forty, and those who joined the Royal

Military Academy were all, or rather half of them, known as "the Forty Thieves." In this examination I attained the ninety-fifth place on the list of candidates and was offered a commission in the Royal Marine Artillery, but, apart from my aversion to the sea, that service had no attraction for me, so the offer was politely declined. It was now arranged that I should remain at Wimbledon for another year, instead of competing at the next examination for Sandhurst in the winter, for my age did not permit of another attempt for Woolwich. In the following year I took the fifty-second place for the Royal Military College.

Before I left Wimbledon, Sir Frederick Roberts (later Earl Roberts of Kandahar) paid a visit to the school in the summer following the march from Kabul to Kandahar. He came to see the brother of an officer on his staff, and one of our instructors, Mr Fred Rumble, whom he had known many years earlier in his Addiscombe days, was greatly excited by his visit.

The glad news that I had passed the Sandhurst examination was telegraphed by my father to Alltshellach, North Ballachulish, where I was paying a visit to my cousin, the Dean of Argyll and the Isles, who, not long after, as Bishop of that sea-girt diocese, will I think never be forgotten, so greatly did he endear himself to his following. His west country home, from which his duties so often obliged him to be absent, was a delightful spot, beautifully situated and with romantic associations which those who know the tale of the West Highlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries will remember. There was shooting, of which he had a lease, for my young cousins, and at that time excellent sea-fishing; and another advantage from my point of view was that the gardener, Angus Cameron, was not only a good piper, but a first-class dancer of reel steps and the Highland Fling. His instruction was to prove useful to me at Sandhurst and later on, for indeed I was the only cadet of my term among the several Scotsmen who took part in the reels which were danced at our balls there, when the guests included some officers of the 93rd Highlanders, who were then quartered at Aldershot and who brought with them a piper.

Dancing of any kind was then not the craze it was to become in later years, and the large majority of the cadets



My Father.

[To face p. 20.]





would stand many deep looking on from one end of the gymnasium where the dances were held. Only a comparatively small number took part in the terpsichorean proceedings, which consisted of waltzes, polkas, schottisches, mazurkas, and a few square dances and reels, the first of which required more space and considerably more exertion than do the foxtrots and other grotesquely named rhythmic steps of to-day.

Before leaving Alltshellach that summer I had arranged to take, in company with a friend, John Wedderburn, the early morning steamer from South Ballachulish pier which would bring us to Oban, the then terminus of the railway to Edinburgh and Glasgow, to which latter place we were bound. A day or two, therefore, after the arrival of my father's telegram we left, but we did not reach our destination without a mishap which might have terminated more disastrously than it did. In order to reach the pier at which the S.S. *Iona* touched on her way south from Fort William we had to cross the ferry near Alltshellach or row from my cousin's house through the narrow strait which connects the sea lochs of Linnhe and Leven, and thence pull the boat about three-quarters of a mile to the pier. We must have been rather late in starting, somewhere about five-thirty, and as we approached the narrows it was seen that the tide was racing through at several miles an hour in the direction opposite to that in which we wished to go, so that it would be quicker to run the boat on shore and try to reach the steamer by road, carrying our baggage as best we could should no vehicle be procurable at the hotel near the ferry. Unfortunately, the spring tide carried us some hundred yards in the wrong direction; but as soon as we arrived at the hotel we were relieved to see standing in the stable-yard a dog-cart which had already conveyed someone to the pier and from which an ostler was engaged in unharnessing the horse. Bidding him buckle to, we climbed on to the seat, where he joined us and, putting the horse into a smart canter, we were soon speeding along the road to the pier feeling satisfied that our troubles were over. Meanwhile, on rounding a corner the black smoke from the red funnels of the *Iona*, which was coming up the loch from Corran Ferry, appeared in view, and we calculated that with luck we might catch her, though it would be a near thing.

On we sped, urging the driver to get every ounce out of his steed when, without the least warning, the near wheel came off the axle and in a moment my friend Wedderburn shot over the side of the vehicle and I followed him, landing with a goodly bump. Lastly, the driver rolled off, and as I picked myself up, half stunned, I could see the horse and cart tearing down the road, the axle digging up the ground and our baggage tumbling out of the back. As it turned out it was fortunate that the accident occurred in full view of the steamer, for the captain told me later that he had assumed that our intention was to catch her and he had consequently delayed casting off.

Meanwhile, feeling bruised and shaken, and seizing our baggage, we made the best of our way to the pier. My friend, who always wore Highland dress, had his knees badly cut, my knuckles were skinned, and we both required some attention from the steward before we were presentable. We had, however, reason to congratulate ourselves that the near-side wheel had become detached and not that on the off-side, for had it been the latter we should in all probability have received worse injuries, perhaps even broken necks, since on the side of the road next the loch, before its present-day reconstruction, there was a low wall, and between it and the sea not a shingle or sandy beach, but a succession of evil-looking, jagged rocks.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE.

I JOINED the Royal Military College in September 1881, and there I spent some of the happiest days of my life. During the first six months I shared a room, as was the custom, with J. A. H. Woodward, who, like most of the cadets of my year, joined the Indian Army, and few of whom I met in later years. He was, however, an exception, for during the Tirah Campaign of 1897-98 we ran across each other at Peshawar, where he was quartered with his regiment, the 37th Dogras, and once again much later, after we had both retired from the Service. I may mention that when I joined the College my height was nearly six feet, and at eighty it is much the same, while my weight is only about a stone more than it was at that time.

In my day the Governor of the College, then in his seventh year of office, was General Sir William C. E. Napier, the third son of General Sir George Napier of Peninsular War fame, whose ancestor, like my own, married one of the Lennox co-heiresses, a matter to which I have earlier referred. Sir William was a distinguished-looking man, of whom, except when we marched past him at church parade on Sundays, we saw little, for the post he held was then somewhat of a sinecure, the real work falling on the shoulders of the Commandant, Colonel Fred Middleton, who wore peg-top overalls and had a pretty, dark-haired wife—a Canadian lady, I think.

On the Sunday parade, as the several companies following one another approached the saluting base, the rear ranks used to close up and jam themselves against the backs of the front ranks, so much so that the pressure exerted on the latter almost pushed parts of it out of the alignment. If the ground happened to be muddy the unfortunate rear rankers would arrive at church with overalls and boots (we wore elastic-sided boots, or what were called "Jemimas") soiled by the dirt

thrown up by those behind whom they had so pushingly marched. I mention this procedure which must have been peculiar to the Royal Military College, for when I joined my regiment nothing of the kind was practised nor was it to be found in the drill-book of those days.

I need hardly say that the cadets had nicknames for most of the instructors, who were officers selected from the three arms of the Service. The major who put us through gun drill was known as "Thunder-guts," no doubt on account of the depths from which his words of command seemed to issue; another, a major in the Royal Engineers, was designated "Pi Bill," his name being Williams and he of a religious turn of mind. My company commander, who enjoyed the aristocratic name of Montmorency, was of course known by the shortened form thereof. Then there was the adjutant, who I imagine had risen from the ranks and whose ample boots sufficiently explain his sobriquet of "Bunions." Neither the Governor nor the Commandant was allotted any special designation, for they were regarded with considerable respect.

It was rare to see the Governor, except on Sundays, but some of the cadets whose parents knew him were occasionally invited to his residence, which stood in grounds near the College. One day which I particularly remember he arrived unexpectedly at the gymnasium—now the library—where the squad of which I formed part was executing a series of acrobatic exercises. Presumably to give a display of our agility and level-headedness, Sergeant-Major Bunting gave the command, "Up aloft!" On this there was an immediate rush by the class for the lower series of ladders which slanted against a wall of the building, whence another series sloped in the opposite direction to a beam which stretched from one side of the gymnasium to the other at about twenty feet or more above the wooden floor, but which seemed to me very much higher. Except for a loosely swinging rope which served as a species of balustrade and some wires which ran parallel to and on either side of the beam—of far more moral than actual value—there was nothing to prevent a cadet seized with vertigo from falling to the ground, with disastrous consequences.

Up to the day of Sir William Napier's visit we had not been put to the test as regards steadiness of head which a traverse of the beam involved; and as I was conscious of

my weakness in that respect my heart leaped into my throat as the word of command left the sergeant-major's lips. I hesitated as to what I should do, as did also a tall, red-headed cadet, whose name I refrain from mentioning, until we were the only ones who remained on *terra firma*. All this time the general was looking on, while I was in two minds whether I dared risk my neck or choose rather to be branded as a coward. Suddenly I resolved to adopt the bolder course and tremblingly I crept up one of the ladders. To my intense relief when I reached the spot where there seemed to be nothing between me and eternity I felt a firm hand on my belt, and the sergeant-major, who must have divined my predicament, steadied me across the first few feet of the awful gulf that seemed to threaten me with a sudden and messy death; and I succeeded in gingerly reaching the farther end of the beam and descending in safety to the ground. The other cadet, possibly the more courageous of the two, decided to remain on the ground, and I left him blushing submitting to the chaff of the kindly old general.

As I felt angry with myself at my lack of will-power to overcome a natural weakness, which seemed to be confined to only a few of the cadets, I determined to master it. Choosing therefore a quiet time in the gymnasium I went along the fearsome beam, unaccompanied, no less than thirteen times; but on the last traverse I have no recollection of feeling more at home when above ground than I had done on the first. Some of us, I am convinced, are born with a steady head, some with the reverse, though practice at heights, as my old friend, Charles Bruce of Mount Everest fame, used to assure me, can do much to overcome dizziness. Many years later, when my age was midway between seventy and eighty, I tried when at Axenstein on the Lake of Lucerne to reach the top of the Grosser Mythen and failed; but in the following year I succeeded. This is by no means a climb in the mountaineering sense, but I mention it as it is as much in that direction as I ever managed to reach. Another minor climb was when at seventy-five I ascended Piz Languard, near Pontresina, with a friend who was several years older than myself and many years earlier had climbed the Matterhorn and had met Whymper. Except the last hundred feet or so this ascent was much more a walk than a climb.

While I was at Sandhurst the Director-General of Military Education, Sir Beauchamp Walker, inspected the cadets, but only on the parade ground so far as I knew. He was a tall, fine-looking man, and wore on his frock coat several rows of ribbons, some of which he had acquired when acting as British Military Commissioner with the Crown Prince of Prussia during the campaigns of 1866 and 1870-71. His "herbaceous border," as Winston Churchill one day termed the several rows of ribbons on my own breast, caught my eye as he passed along the ranks, and I pictured the day when active service might bring me a crop of such adornments.

The course of study which we pursued at Sandhurst was congenial to me, for I was conscious that I was working at something that would directly affect my career and was no longer cramming my head with subjects, some of which, except as brain exercises, could be of little service to an infantry soldier. Several years before I joined the College I had, as I have mentioned, taken an interest in military history such as was to be gleaned from works of fiction and, while at Sandhurst, I frequented the library and extended my knowledge during leisure hours by reading biographies and other military works. This early study stood me in good stead when I competed for the Staff College some ten years later, for in military history papers I scored, next to Henry Wilson, higher marks than any other candidate. Tactics and field fortification were the subjects that most interested me, but topography made little appeal to me, for I felt that considering the good maps that were generally available the hours spent on it were excessive.

At the Final Examination in Practical Fortification we were tested by General Sir Gerald Graham, himself an officer of the Royal Engineers, who had won the Victoria Cross during the Crimean War. He directed my class to construct a double-lock bridge, and our instructor, Lieut.-Colonel L. K. Scott, R.E., who, I believe, was the inventor of the sights for guns, whom I liked and who, I think, reciprocated my sentiments, chose me to take charge of the operation. By inadvertence or perhaps anxiety to carry out the work with a minimum of delay—a point of importance if performed in the face of an enemy—I overlooked the fact that certain transoms were lashed on the wrong side of the spars or ledgers, so that when

the completed bridge was tested by the class doubling over it in fours it was a marvel that it stood up to the strain and did not collapse with its burden. However, the flaw in construction passed unnoticed and the class was commended for the efficiency and rapidity with which the work had been executed. That there had been an error was, however, detected by a fellow-instructor, but I imagine that he did no more than chaff Colonel Scott, who told me later what had happened.

The riding at the College was a source of great satisfaction to me, since, with the exception of such equitation as I had enjoyed by occasional mounts on the ponies of friends or on donkeys at the seaside, I had had no opportunity of indulging in that form of exercise. I and three other cadets used on Saturdays to hire horses from one Tubbs at Aldershot and ride about the country near the College. The only mishap that befell our party in their cross-country excursions was when one of us, Billie Walter, a delightful, clever, and amusing fellow, who later joined the Seaforth Highlanders, fell into a deep ditch, dislocated his shoulder, and had to go home in a cart.

At the Final Examination I obtained the thirteenth place, passing out "with honours," my conduct during the year being recorded as "exemplary." My hopes that the comparatively high place I had gained would prevent me from having another cadet posted over my head into whatever regiment it might be my fate to be gazetted were doomed to disappointment; for an Irishman, who passed out a few places ahead of me, was posted to the same unit as myself, and this circumstance affected me many years after, and, on one occasion as will be seen, stood in my way of going on active service.

Before leaving the College we were invited to state in writing what regiment we wished to join, a procedure which I feared would have little or no effect so far as the attainment of my aspirations was concerned. Anyhow, I put my name down for each and every Highland regiment, my first choice being the Gordon Highlanders; and I went home in hopes, though fearing that I might be appointed to an English one. I thought that my father might not feel disposed to further my wishes as to joining a kilted regiment, as at this time the officers of a Highland unit at Edinburgh Castle were reputed



to be given to heavy drinking. However, greatly daring, I approached him on the subject, and to my surprise he made no objection. He wrote to General Alastair Macdonald, whom he knew and who at that time commanded the troops in Scotland. The general had served for a number of years in the 92nd Highlanders, and he replied that he would represent my parent's wishes in the proper quarter, but that the Gordon Highlanders was a regiment which was much sought after and he could not ensure that he would be successful.

For some weeks I lived in hopes, and on the 9th September 1882, just four days before the battle of Tel-el-Kebir in Egypt, I was overjoyed to find myself gazetted to the regiment of my choice. My family were spending the summer at Crieff in Perthshire, and soon after I received an intimation from the adjutant (later General Sir Charles Douglas) informing me where I should get my uniform.





My Mother.

*To face p. 29.*

## CHAPTER V.

### EDINBURGH CASTLE.

THE 2nd Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders—the old 92nd—was then at Fort Gomer, Southsea, and was due to arrive at Edinburgh in a few weeks, and there I joined it in October. Shortly before I did so my father told me what allowance he proposed to give me, and at the same time he asked me to promise on my word of honour that in no circumstance would I ever back a bill for anyone, as to do so might lead to trouble. Since I gave that promise, twice has it happened that I have been asked to act contrary to his wishes, and I had much less difficulty in regretting my inability to acquiesce than otherwise would have been the case.

The commanding officer of the battalion when I joined it was Lieut.-Colonel George Stewart White, V.C., C.B., afterwards Field-Marshal, who, like my captain, had won the Victoria Cross in the Afghan War. It did not take me long to discover that the 92nd, with a record much enhanced by its recent war service, which included the march from Kabul to Kandahar, resented being linked to the 75th Stirlingshire Regiment, which, though it had done good service during the Indian Mutiny, had long ceased to draw recruits from Scotland. Joining the regiment soon after the amalgamation I was therefore a witness of the coolness of the relations that prevailed between the officers of the two battalions, which was almost entirely confined to the one to which I belonged.

More than thirty years later, when it might have been supposed that such pettiness would have died out, the same narrow-minded spirit came under my notice in the case of a battalion which formed part of the brigade I then commanded, although, be it noted, every officer belonging to it

had joined the Army many years after the introduction of the linking system. The battalion in question hailed from the Emerald Isle, and besides being at issue with that which had been linked to it in 1881 there was another Irish unit in the brigade which it looked upon with an unfavourable eye. I happened to know the genesis of the hostility, which was confined to one side only, and as proximity is said to create love between two fellow beings of different sexes, though this case was not on all fours, I took care that when possible the two battalions, without their suspecting the reason, were brought together as much as possible when in camp or in the field. The effect of this was that ill-feeling gradually disappeared, and the incident which was at the root of the trouble was forgotten.

As regards the Gordon Highlanders it was fortunate that the commanding officer had none of these prejudices, but was far-seeing and broadminded, and no doubt realised what harm might ensue were such a state of affairs allowed not only to persist but be encouraged. He took a strong line which I know did not meet with the approval of some of his officers, the result of which was that besides the officers of the two regular battalions, those of the 3rd or Militia Battalion—most of whom had associations, territorial or other, with that part of Scotland whence the majority of our recruits were drawn—were invited to become members of the regimental dinner club.

Not many weeks after I joined, my father, he being then for the second time President of the College of Physicians of Edinburgh, invited my colonel, my captain, and me to the annual dinner of that body. It was held in their hall in Queen Street, and on that occasion I heard for the first and only time a display of my parent's oratory, which he possessed in no small degree. Though more than six decades have passed since the date on which the dinner took place, I have still a vivid recollection of his easy flow of language and the witty remarks interspersed in his speech.

I have in my possession a menu of the kind of dinners given by the College of Physicians of those days, and as it is a good example of the gargantuan banquets so unlike those of the present day I give it :—

## MENU DU 8 DECEMBRE 1881.

Les Huitres.

Les Huitres.

*Potages.*

Tortue claire. Purée de Volaille à l'Impératrice.

*Poissons.*

Turbot, Sauce homard. Eperlans frits.

Cabillaud, Sauce Hollandaise.

*Entrées.*

Petites Bouchées, Monglas. Filets de Lièvre, Sauce aigre-douce.

Côtelettes à la Bourguignotte. Escalope Ris de Veau, Jardinière.

*Relevés.*

Dinde à la Chipolata. Jambon au Madère. Selle de Mouton.

Hanche de Venaison. Aloyau de Bœuf.

*Gibier.*

Faisans. Perdrix. Coqs de Bruyère. Bécasses.

Mayonnaise de Homard à l'Aspic.

*Entremets.*

Charlotte de pommes à l'Abricot. Beignets soufflés, fleur d'Oranger.

Gâteaux Génois à la Crème de Moka. Gelée au Kirsch.

Crèmes Bavaroises.

Compôtes de Pêches.

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 Petits soufflés glacés. Paillettes au Parmesan.  
 Désert et Glaces.

On reading over this menu it strikes me that the subject of dietetics must have considerably advanced in the last fifty years, a fact which may account in some degree for the greater prolongation of life at the present day.

Soon after this dinner and before I was dismissed recruits' drill I was ordered to be the subaltern of a party of one hundred men, with a major and a captain, which was to proceed by rail to Fort George, where we were to remain for the night. At this time it was customary for the fish arriving from the Isle of Skye to be loaded on to a train at the Kyle of Loch Alsh on Sunday mornings, whence it was despatched so as to reach Billingsgate early on Mondays. As the operation of loading offended the religious susceptibilities of the "unco guid," the authorities had been warned that the presence of an armed force was desirable. The major in command of the party kept on reiterating during the journey that, if perchance he

had to open fire, his name—a Highland one—would assuredly descend to posterity with a blot on it such as that which to this day attaches to the patronymic of Campbell of Glen Lyon in connection with the massacre of Glencoe. The captain of the detachment, a witty Englishman—I never was sure whether he was joking or serious—kept poking fun at his superior officer while apparently sympathising with him in the predicament which he foresaw he might have to face.

But the anxious field officer was to be spared the ignominy he dreaded, for there was no riot ; the local inhabitants, seeing troops on the spot, thought better of it ; the ship was peacefully loaded, and next day we returned to Edinburgh, having gained neither laurels nor obloquy during our expedition to the Highlands, accompanied by numerous tikes of low degree which the Seaforth Highlanders had presented to their fellow countrymen.

One of the duties, of a very different nature from the foregoing, which befell the junior officers of the regiment on arrival at a new station was to return calls made on the officers by the inhabitants. Being rather shy, I particularly disliked having to call on total strangers, which involved a tactful indication of who one was and why one was intruding. Indeed, I sometimes went so far as to ring the house door bell only when I felt certain that I would be met with a " not at home." In the days to which I refer it was *de rigueur* not only to leave one's cards after dining out, but inquire if one's recent hostess was at home. It seems strange, too, in these informal days that it was customary for a caller not to leave in the entrance hall his hat and stick, though not his umbrella, but take them with him into the drawing-room. Another custom which I only once recall noticing at Edinburgh, but which must have prevailed in London—judging by the illustrations in 'Punch' of that period—was for male guests to take with them at an evening party or ball, held under the arm, a crush hat or gibus. I recollect seeing Sir George Warrender, an old 92nd man who exchanged to the Guards, flying round the room with his partner in a *deux temps* waltz with his head-dress so carried.

While quartered at the Castle I sometimes interested myself by hunting about for tokens of past history, as so many tragic and other scenes had been enacted within its walls.

Quite unknown to me, and I am sure also to my family, several earlier members of it had been associated with the fortress, and two of them, both bearing the name of Archibald Haldane, one in the sixteenth century and another in the reign of Charles II., had held the office of constable. The latter, with the totally inadequate garrison of fifteen men, followers of his kinsman, the Earl of Mar, had been compelled by greatly superior forces, coupled with stratagem, in which a member of the fair sex had a share, to surrender his charge to General Alexander Leslie, Commander-in-Chief of the Covenanting Forces—a man of considerable war experience. For this dereliction of duty Haldane was subsequently exonerated by the King, and the fact that his defence of the Castle was not strenuous, small as was his force, may have been due to sympathy with the Covenanting party, whom Mar is reputed to have secretly favoured.

The fact that the Gordon Highlanders were quartered at the historic stronghold led to many former officers visiting them from time to time, and one of the more interesting was Field-Marshal Lord Strathnairn, who was our colonel. Several decades earlier he had been better known as Sir Hugh Rose, and for a few years had held the rank of major in the 92nd Highlanders. In the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny he had particularly distinguished himself, and wherever he was employed had earned a name for utter disregard of danger and fearless acceptance of responsibility. One day we were warned that he was to dine with us, and as many officers as happened to be on the spot were bidden to be present. That evening when the field-marshal walked into the ante-room he appeared dressed in the full uniform of his rank and not in mess dress as we all were. He was a strikingly handsome old warrior, with numerous war decorations on his tunic, and with the figure of a man in the 'twenties, and his good looks, I heard later, had at one time played havoc among the fair sex.

Next morning, when talking to Colonel White, I remarked that it was unfortunate that on the previous evening we had been improperly dressed. He laughed and said that on the contrary the field-marshal was the sinner; and he added with a twinkle in his eye that he had not been at all surprised when our guest walked into the ante-room, evidently leading to



the inference that vanity was to be found even in the highest ranks of the Army.

Once again I saw the old soldier, at my first levée at St James's Palace on 14th March 1885, when he presented me and several of my brother officers to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, who was taking the place of Queen Victoria. Lord Strathnairn was still colonel of the Gordon Highlanders and died not many months later. As I have said, he made a great impression on me, and I never pass through Knightsbridge and look up at the effigy of the *beau sabreur* of Mutiny days, erect on his charger, with cocked hat rakishly tilted to one side, than I feel constrained to doff my head-dress in pious memory of my old colonel.

A function in which the battalion at Edinburgh had a share was the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which was held annually in an ecclesiastical building near the Castle. For this gathering of Scottish divines, over which the Lord High Commissioner presided, a guard of honour with the Queen's colour was furnished by the garrison. It made its first appearance at Holyrood Palace, where the Queen's representative was in residence, and after paying the usual compliments hastened up the High Street to take position again at some point on the route, ready to repeat the honours when the Commissioner with his escort arrived by a more circuitous way. This proceeding might almost have led to the belief that a fresh body of troops was performing the duties at the several stages on the route, though owing to rapid marching and the devious direction followed, but one company was required for their performance. On one occasion during our term at the Castle I proudly carried for the first time the royal colour when I think the late Earl of Aberdeen was fulfilling the duties of the Queen's representative.

The custom of flinging ordure into the High Street from the windows of lofty buildings still prevailed, and on a hot summer's morning as the battalion marched to the Queen's Park for manœuvres the stench was most unpleasant. Some years earlier than when I was quartered at the Castle the habit had prevailed of indicating to passers-by the oncoming deluge of filth by the cry of "gardylloo," a warning to the unwary what he might expect.

A few months after I joined the regiment it was arranged that a kind of local regimental dinner should take place at the Palace Hotel in Princes Street, at which, besides serving officers, some former ones would be present. I should mention in this connection that I had joined the Army about three years after the Afghan War, and the amount of reminiscencing that went on about it among the junior officers was such that I am sure that I could have passed with credit an examination on the events of that campaign. After leaving India the regiment had gone to South Africa, but little was said about experiences in that country, and in consequence I acquired less knowledge of the fighting there than I could have wished. As I did not like to appear inquisitive I asked no questions, and I was therefore not a little pleased when one day the announcement of this dinner was made, as I understood that the subject of Majuba would be raised.

Two years had elapsed since three companies of what was then known as the 92nd Highlanders, along with detachments of other troops, had been involved in the defeat at Majuba Mountain; and Major Hay, who had been in command of the detachment of the 92nd Highlanders—Colonel White being then in India or on leave—was to give an account of the occurrence.

I will not state what was said as I have forgotten all about it, but after he had spoken at some length it was felt that the honour of the regiment had been vindicated and that there were not the slightest grounds for the aspersions that had been thrown by irresponsible and ill-informed persons on the conduct of the troops.

After the passage of sixty years my recollection of the events of the evening have faded, but when leaving the hotel I recall seeing the tallest of the dozen or so officers who were about or over six feet in height walk into a great glass door at the entrance. The result was seen when the fragments fell like a necklace round his shoulders, fortunately causing only superficial wounds. I should perhaps mention that among the wines we had enjoyed that evening was Perrier-Jouet, 1874, a vintage celebrated then and for some years after; but in recalling this I do not wish it to be inferred that the exit of the gallant Highlander from the hotel in so

shattering a manner was in any way attributable to over-indulgence in the sparkling wine of France.

The New Year was now at hand, and it was the custom for the commanding officer, accompanied by the battalion staff and the orderly officer, who at Edinburgh was also in command of the Castle guard, to visit at the dinner hour the eight companies of which a battalion then and for some years after was composed, as well as the band and pipers; and at the quarters of each a toast was drunk. In later years sherry was provided "for the officers," but on the 1st January 1883, when I happened to be orderly officer, I was obliged to swallow no less than eight glasses of spirits, plus another glass at the quarters of the musical portion of the battalion. I managed to survive the ordeal, as I have a pretty strong head, provided the liquors are not mixed, and slept off the effects in the guard-room during the afternoon.

Being the last joined I was at everyone's beck and call and no leave came my way, but in the summer following that Christmas my colonel, who was always very kind and considerate to me, told me that if I liked I might have a fortnight's leave, so I was able to fulfil an engagement, and sailed from Leith for the Shetland Islands, where I joined an old friend, Mr Thoms, who was Sheriff of Orkney, Caithness, and Shetland. After some days at Lerwick, the capital of the northernmost group of islands, where I joined the sheriff, I went to Kirkwall, the chief town in the Orkneys, and thence to the island of Rousay, which belonged to General Burroughs, a Mutiny veteran who had distinguished himself at Lucknow and whom I had met in Edinburgh. I think that the main attraction of the general's island home was that his niece by marriage—a remarkably pretty girl—was spending the summer there. We had known each other at Edinburgh, where her family lived, and later she married a Scots baronet, an alliance which proved to be anything but happy.

In the spring of the following year I had another spell of leave, which I passed at Fintray House and Craigievar Castle in Aberdeenshire with my friend, John Forbes, the eldest son of Sir William Forbes, who not long after succeeded to the barony of Sempill. While at Fintray on the Don I caught my first salmon in the Mill Pool at Fare-me-well, nearby which some cousins lived.

Before returning to Edinburgh we decided that we would go on a short walking tour to Inverness, and on the first day we reached Newe, forty miles distant. As neither my friend nor I was over-burdened with this world's goods we subsisted mainly on porridge, which was more eaten in those days than at the present time. The third day of the tour found Forbes with feet so badly blistered that he was obliged to travel from Cawdor to Inverness by bus, while I made my way across Culloden Moor, passing the site of the battle in which five of the Haldane family had taken part on one side or the other.

During the winter in which I joined the regiment, and before my visit to Fintray, a somewhat strange incident of which I can offer no explanation happened to me at the Castle. Most of the officers were quartered in the unsightly building which overlooks Castle Terrace and which went by the name of the "Rookery," from the exalted position it occupied. When one of the high winds which prevail at certain seasons at the Scottish capital had been released by the clerk of the weather, dwellers in the Rookery experienced the sensation of being on the point of precipitation into the valley some hundreds of feet below. As, however, I am not concerned with the weather in what I am about to relate, which was not boisterous on any of the occasions to which I shall refer, I shall say no more on that point.

I had never heard tell of ghosts in the Castle, though the number of persons, important or other, who had been done to death within its precincts was considerable. On two occasions when I was an occupant of the Rookery I was to have an experience which made me wonder whether the departed ones haunt places with which they have been associated during their lives.

The first occasion of what I will call a visitation, unearthly or other, took place on a Saturday night during the leave season, when most of the rooms in that part of the Castle were unoccupied. On the night in question I was fast asleep, and in my dreams I seemed to be on the stage of a theatre where scene-shifting was in progress. This went on for some time till I suddenly awoke to realise that the door of my room, which I had shut but not locked before turning in, was slowly being pushed open. Lying on my bed was my bull-terrier, who, like myself, was roused and began growling. As the

subalterns were given to playing pranks and "drawing" one another I caught hold of the dog's collar lest he should attack the disturber of the peace, when I noticed that his coat was bristling and at the same time I called out, "Who's there?" When no reply came I jumped out of bed, lit a candle—this was before the days of electric light—and with my dog went out into the passage. The door was ajar when I went to it and not a soul was to be seen or heard, and though the dog hunted around there was no result.

Next morning on mentioning the matter I found that no such visitation as I had thought possible had taken place, so far as my brother officers were concerned. I thought no more about the matter, but took the precaution of placing a candle and a box of matches on a chair by the side of my bed. Soon after this I parted with my bull-terrier, who was not a good house dog, and for some time I did not replace him.

Exactly six weeks later, again on a Saturday night and about the same time, I had a repetition of the experience. This time I had decided what I would do and lay still, and after some seconds struck a light, but nothing was to be seen, and a search in the passage disclosed no one. I must mention that on both occasions the night was still, so that there could be no question of the door being forced open by a gust of wind.

Some time passed and my friend Forbes, who was preparing to enter the Army through the militia, arrived to be attached to the regiment and was allotted a room facing mine on the opposite side of the passage. About 2 A.M., approximately the hour of the earlier visitations, he appeared at my bedside looking somewhat perturbed and told me that he had woken up and had distinctly felt a cold hand under his back. He was positive that what had occurred was not attributable to a dream or nightmare, and in view of my own experiences, which I had not mentioned to him, I was naturally much interested.

As in my own case, the door of his room was open when he awoke. We put on slippers and dressing-gowns and hunted about inside and outside in bright moonlight, but nothing that could account for the visitation was to be seen. I can offer no explanation of these nocturnal incidents. It is true that the Rookery was accessible from the men's quarters on

the storey below, but there was no reason why anyone should have been tempted to invade the room of an officer above, more especially when to do so might involve an encounter with a bull-terrier.

The summer of 1884 brought with it orders for a change of station, these arriving after a hint which, as generally was the case, had come from the brewers who supplied the wet canteen. We were sorry to leave the Scottish capital, and I was disappointed to have to conduct on foot the married women and children to the train and not enjoy for the last time the march down the Castle hill and through the streets of Auld Reekie. The point of our departure was the Caledonian Station, as we were to board H.M.S. *Assistance* at Greenock ; and on our arrival on the platform my bull-terrier—a successor to the one I had at the time of the unexplained visitation—distinguished himself by settling a quarrel with a canine rival.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DEVONPORT.

THE sun was shining brightly as we rounded the eastern end of Plymouth breakwater, and had I known then more of my forebears I might have taken more interest in the scenery than I did. One of them, Captain Robert Haldane, almost exactly a hundred years earlier, after making several successful cruises in the Channel and capturing a number of French privateers, had had the ill-luck to run on a rock in the Sound through the breaking of a hawser in a storm of wind, which led to his being unemployed for some years. That did not prevent him from being placed on full pay later when he distinguished himself at the siege of Pondicherry, and ended a career of great promise when in command of the 60-gun ship *America* in 1761. Before that year the future Viscount Duncan of Camperdown, who was his cousin, had served under him and had had his first taste of active service. Robert had a younger brother who was adjutant of the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards and who died after seven years' service in the Army.

When we came to the quay at Devonport several bands sent by regiments of the garrison were awaiting our arrival, and, headed by them, we marched to Raglan Barracks, which were to be our quarters. Opposite us in the same barracks was the 2nd Battalion of the King's Royal Rifles, a unit which, with the 92nd, had taken part in the march from Kabul to Kandahar.

Not long after we arrived at Devonport our regimental sports were held, when an event took place of which I have sometimes been reminded when I have met officers of the 60th Rifles who were at that station at the time it took place. The event in question was a novel one and, besides arousing friendly rivalry, provided amusement for the spectators. The idea was that the officers of each battalion should race with

their fire-engine from one end of the gravelled parade ground to the other, and on arriving there fix a hose to the hydrants, of which there were two conveniently situated only a few yards apart. The teams would then proceed to deluge their opponents until they succumbed under the stream of water squirted on them and gave up the contest. Of course the team which could first manage to start pumping would be in a position to interfere with the similar procedure of their antagonists, and this was what actually happened.

With the stoutest field officer that each battalion could produce—and they were more plentiful in those days—wearing a fireman's brass helmet and perched precariously on the top of the vehicle, the race started from the end of the parade ground nearer to the officers' mess of the 60th Rifles. Swaying from side to side in an alarming manner, our fire-engine with its breathless crew arrived first at the far end of the course and succeeded in screwing their hose on to the hydrant, when the efforts of those at the pumps—and very exhausting work it was—were so effective that the 60th were prevented from getting theirs going and, drenched to the skin, were driven from the field.

When at Devonport the adjutant of the battalion, Brevet-Major C. W. H. Douglas, who many years later was to become Chief of the Imperial General Staff, suggested that I should become his understudy and learn the adjutant's work with the view of some day succeeding him. I gladly assented, and for some months I spent many hours daily picking up all I could and sometimes acting for him when he went on leave.

On one occasion I underwent an experience which has probably befallen many young adjutants or aspirants to that position; and though I flattered myself that I knew my drill-book (field exercise it was called) fairly well, I found that I did not know it well enough. The possible number of movements in the 'eighties was far more numerous than in later years, when drill had become much simplified, but even so they did not suffice to admit of my keeping the battalion fully occupied for the duration of the parade. I remember trying to kill time by introducing quite unreasonably long pauses between the different manœuvres during which the men stood "easy," all the time conscious that the sergeant-major, who had come to us from the Scots Guards, saw through



my device. I had, too, in my mind what contributed to my nervousness, for at mess one day, among the frequent reminiscences from which I suffered, someone related how when the regiment was at Jullundur in the Punjab a certain young officer, in the absence of the adjutant, had had to take the daily parade. After carrying out a certain movement he had given the command "front turn," when to his dismay he found that one half of the battalion was doubling in the direction of Delhi while the other was hastening at speed in a contrary sense towards Peshawar. Those who were in the Army in the days of which I write and have not forgotten their drill will have no difficulty in recognising the movement which led to such a calamity. I may add that when I had more experience as well as *sangfroid* I was to find that little beyond half a dozen evolutions would suffice to fill up those dreaded sixty minutes.

On one of the occasional periods when I acted as adjutant a letter arrived from Lady Butler, then perhaps better known as Miss Elizabeth Thomson, the painter of "The Roll Call," "Scotland for Ever," and other well-known military pictures. She was then living in a house on the Hoe at Plymouth and was engaged on her painting of "Tel-el-Kebir." It depicts the scene at the close of the battle when Sir Garnet Wolseley, as he then was, arriving with his staff at a gallop at a bridge over a canal, pulls up his charger, throwing him back on his haunches with forelegs outstretched. In contrast with the suddenly arrested movement of horse and rider, Miss Thomson had introduced a drummer lad of the Gordon Highlanders, who took part in the battle and who stands strictly at "attention" with his right hand at the "salute." The drummer was the subject of the letter in question, and one of the best-looking in the battalion was sent as a model. When I went to see the artist to tell her of the arrangement she showed how careful she was to ensure that her work was accurate in the smallest detail by inquiring as to certain minutiae of regimental dress and equipment. One of her queries was on which occasions it was customary for the pipers to parade with the drones of their instruments held together by green cords only and when with both cords and ribbons of Gordon tartan.

Before Colonel White left to take up a staff appointment in Egypt, which country was then and for many years a centre

of perennial war activity, an order was received for three subalterns to be sent to fill vacancies in the 1st Battalion which some time earlier had moved there from Malta. When I was acting as adjutant I became aware of this order and I begged the colonel to let me be one of those chosen. He asked me if my people knew of my wish and, when I was obliged to reply in the negative, said it would be better for me to wait until I was older. I held my peace, though disagreeing with him, and he selected two senior subalterns and Hector Macdonald. The first two failed later in the promotion examination to captain and left the Service, and Macdonald, who had the misfortune to be kept at the depot at Cairo and did not take part in the Nile expedition, in course of time distinguished himself and attained the rank of major-general.

It was after Colonel White left us that the Duke of Cambridge arrived to inspect the garrison, and he immediately missed his presence, for as he rode round the line I heard him say to the commanding officer, "Where's White?" At lunch that day I happened to be placed next to Sir George Harman, who was Military Secretary, and he asked me how we were off for leave. As we were then short of several subalterns, besides those who had gone to Egypt, I took advantage of his question to say that we were well under strength in junior officers. The general, who struck me as of a sympathetic nature, made a note of what I replied and not long after we received our quota.

I think that it was shortly after the colonel had departed that the adjutant also left to fill a similar post with the London Scottish Regiment, a volunteer unit with which for some years there was to be a close connection with the Gordon Highlanders. As I had often acted for him when he was on leave I had hoped that I might take his place, but the successor of Colonel White thought otherwise, and I was appointed to be officer in charge of the battalion signallers and sent to the School of Signalling at Aldershot, where I passed through a course which qualified me for that post.

While at Aldershot I went to Ascot races for the first time, doing so in company with Lord and Lady St Germans and others, and driving from Windsor through the park to the course by a private route. I had not provided myself with a voucher admitting me to the Royal Enclosure, not being

aware that such a procedure was necessary, but my host introduced me on the course to Lord Cork, who was then Master of the Horse, and he at once gave me a slip of paper which for the sum of one guinea—a much smaller amount than in later years—procured me the privilege of entry. In the 'eighties, and for some years after, the Royal Enclosure was considerably more "select" than in the democratic times that followed. I recollect noticing among the occupants some whose appearance was known to me and these included the Duke of Edinburgh and Lord Randolph Churchill, both of whom I saw for the first and only time. I am not lucky in betting, so have cause to remember that Lord St Germans introduced me to Lord Bradford, who kindly gave me a tip by which I won £5 in backing one of his horses.

In the days when I was quartered at Devonport it was a popular station, and the proprietors of estates in the neighbourhood were more hospitable than at any other place at home, except Ireland. We thus enjoyed a good deal of sport when duty did not prevent our taking advantage of their kindness. Some of the places where I enjoyed shooting were Mount Edgcumbe, Port Eliot, and Membrand. Once at Mount Edgcumbe at a big shoot in which several rather important people took part—my first shoot of the season to which I had been invited at short notice—I arrived without being in possession of a game licence and was disturbed to see following the beaters a police officer who was in uniform. I pictured to myself the guests being invited to produce their shooting credentials, and what a fool I should look when found, even unintentionally, defrauding the revenue. I spent quite an anxious time until I began to suspect that the representative of the law was merely a sporting bobby and was present with no such intention as my uneasy conscience imputed to him. Next day he appeared again, evidently not over-burdened with police duties, so as a precautionary measure I took the opportunity of entering into conversation with him, when I found that he was friendly and that there were no grounds for anxiety.

At this shoot one of the guests was Sidney Herbert, later Earl of Pembroke, and to this day, and I have seen a good many expert shots since then, I remember how he seemed literally to drag down tall pheasants from the sky, hardly

ever missing a bird, one of which fell dead on the deck of a collier quite some way out in the Sound. At dinner that evening I asked him how he came to be such an expert shot, and he encouragingly remarked that anyone who fired as many thousand cartridges each year as he did could hardly fail to reach a high standard of markmanship.

Our stay in the south of England was all too short, for it was the pleasantest quarter at which I was ever stationed, and on the 18th December 1885 we sailed once again on board the *Assistance* and arrived off Guernsey next day. There the headquarters disembarked, while three companies proceeded in a small paddle-steamer to the island of Alderney, whither I also went, having been selected to be acting adjutant of the detachment.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CHANNEL ISLANDS.

OUR new station was such that one felt very much out of the world, though after a time the sensation of isolation decreased and one began to conceive a liking for the place. Of society with a capital "S" there was practically none, and connection with the United Kingdom was, especially in the winter months, precarious. When the weather was such as to make it impossible for the *Courrier*, the little mail-boat that plied between Guernsey and Alderney and then to Cherbourg, to enter the harbour of our island we were sometimes deprived of letters and newspapers for several days. The island was in some respects little better than that on which Robinson Crusoe was marooned, except that we had not the excitement caused by occasional descents of cannibals. Our visitors, and they were extremely few, were not of a kind to create alarm or despondency, though inspection fever which preceded their arrival might cause the temperature of some to rise.

Our quarters were in Fort Albert, the largest and most conspicuous of the numerous permanent works which, except on the southern side of the island where the cliffs were precipitous, dot the coast at intervals. When the wind, as it often did in winter, blew a gale one's thoughts reverted to the days when we inhabited the Rookery at Edinburgh Castle ; and as the gravel on the diminutive parade ground inside the fort was prone to fly against and smash our window-panes there was a special government allowance for such breakages. I need hardly say that such unusual generosity was taken full advantage of to write off damage which was not always due to the freaks of nature—or, as it was officially termed, to the act of God—but to more material causes.

I do not ever remember having seen such waves as at times beat against the solidly built breakwater, the spray from which sometimes rose in the air to at least one hundred feet, and

in one great storm drove through it a hole wide enough to have allowed the passage of a coach. At the landward end of the pier practice from one of the forts, whose guns may have dated, as in some of our possessions in the West Indies, from Tudor days, was carried out with round shot, a procedure which did not tend to diminish the sensation that Alderney was rather behind the times.

Drink and tobacco, the duty on which must have been exceedingly small, were inexpensive, and it is not to be wondered at that in the absence of amenities the temptation to drown care in the bottle, with the usual accompaniment of crime of various sorts, was great. As, however, there were periodical changes among the companies through the arrival of others from Guernsey for musketry—there being no suitable rifle-range on that island—there was a certain amount of relief from the boredom that would have been created among the men had no such changes taken place, and had the troops been obliged, as were the signallers, who were still under my charge, to remain continually on the smaller island, except during the furlough season.

In the days of which I write there were no special officers, as I believe there are or were recently in our Army, who were entrusted with the duty of arranging diversions for the men, and had there been I am sure that their presence would have been resented by the company officers whose concern this was. But occasional paper-chases, such as were possible on an island in length only six miles and a little more than a third of that distance in breadth, and bathing helped in summer to pass the time not taken up by military duties. The bathing parades used to cause me some concern when my turn came round to take the men to the bay where they took place. The currents between the island and the French coast are abnormally strong, running at several miles an hour, and the men were given to swim too far out, despite warnings to the contrary. As, moreover, we were not provided with a boat or any kind of rescuing apparatus, these parades did not take place without some risk. Sometimes when the men were engaged in their favourite sport of sea-fishing with the rod they would get cut off by the rapidly rising tide, and for several hours would have to remain on some rock surrounded by the sea.

In the winter we used to get up concerts, but they were difficult to arrange owing to the almost complete lack of talent. As regards amusements for the officers, beyond a rare visit to Cherbourg, which like most provincial towns in France or elsewhere was not productive of anything worthy of the name of entertainment, there was little that could be done to break the monotony of existence. A bird-lover might at certain seasons have found interest in the fact that Alderney and the adjacent islets served as nesting-places for numerous and varied species of feathered life, and in the migratory period cuckoos in large numbers and even hoopoes were visitors *en route* to more delectable regions. As sea-fishing enjoyed from a small boat had little attraction for me owing to my dislike of salt water, I refrained from accompanying my brother officers on their expeditions, deciding that I could employ my leisure better by working for the Staff College examination, though several years must elapse before I should have the necessary service to qualify me to compete. Fortunately, there arrived at St Anne, the insignificant and only town on the island, a certain Mr Dyne, the former master of a school at Clapham which had been conducted on the system of the Swiss educationist, Pestalozzi. With him I studied French and German, in which languages I made considerable progress, and on his advice I spent part of my winter's leave in Paris.

For about six weeks I quartered myself with a middle-aged widowed French lady, by no means attractive, whose only son was at a *lycée* nearby and who spent his Sundays with her. I used to wander about the streets of old and modern Paris, and one of the first places I visited was the Morgue, where the corpses of persons were displayed by the police for the purpose of identification. The son of my hostess was a typically French youth, and in spite of the difference of ages we became very friendly, and his weekly arrival was something which I looked forward to. On the day I left to return to Alderney he was quite overcome, and without warning flung his arms round my neck at the railway station, where he was seeing me off, and saying, "*Il faut que je vous embrasse,*" proceeded to kiss me effusively first on one cheek and then on the other. The next time that that kind of thing was to happen to me was during the Great War, when I was given the *accolade* by a French general on receiving the cross of the



Myself, 1886.

[To face p. 48.]





Legion of Honour at the headquarters of General Rawlinson. The general in question was well below me in inches and to reach my face had to stand on tiptoes, though I bent down towards him. During the ceremony, out of the corner of my eye I could see Rawlinson's assistant military secretary, Lord Hamilton of Dalzell, whose face was wreathed in smiles.

While at Paris I made the acquaintance of a few French officers. They were polite, but not disposed to be friendly; and one of them took me to a ball at the Palais Bourbon, which was given by the then Prime Minister, Monsieur Floquet, standing beside whom on the dais was the Colonial Minister, Jules Ferry, a well-known figure at that time. My principal recollection of this entertainment, which was of a distinctly democratic nature and accessible to all and sundry provided they wore evening dress, was that the *jeunes filles* were, without exception, *poudrées*, and this extraneous addition to their toilet not only enhanced the picturesqueness of the scene, but helped to improve looks that fell far short of those one would have seen in a London ballroom. As my knowledge of the French language would not allow me to join in the proceedings I was obliged, as my companion said, to *faire la tapisserie*.

My stay in the French capital coincided with the days when Bismarck was in one of his truculent moods, and his late enemies, having recovered from their defeat of 1870-71 more quickly than was expected, were being once again threatened with invasion. General Boulanger, the Minister of War, was at the height of his brief popularity, and his appearance, though insignificant when on foot, aroused enthusiasm when mounted on his big black charger. I never saw him at what might be called his best, but had a good view of him one afternoon when he presided, surrounded by many general officers, at a *concours d'escrime* at the *Cirque d'Été* in the Champs Elysées.

At this time the newspapers were bitterly hostile towards Britain, and much of their abuse was directed at our royal family, perhaps owing to their relationship with the Hohenzollerns and other German royalties. The caricatures in some illustrated papers of Queen Victoria and the Duke of Cambridge were in the worst possible taste, while no one I came across seemed in the least degree to deprecate the

unbridled vulgarity of a section of the press. The French, however, are given at times to regard everybody and everything as fair game for criticism or ridicule, while their politeness, like veneer, is only a surface adornment.

At the French capital, as at London, in the days I was there and for some years after, one would not have dreamed of walking out except dressed in "town kit"—that is to say, in a tail or frock coat and chimney-pot hat. Such dress, somewhat uncomfortable as it may have seemed in hot weather, certainly gave an air of distinction to the wearers, but at the present day would look out of place except at weddings, funerals, or certain official occasions.

During my stay in Paris, which I got to know pretty well, I had an anxious time, as my father was far from well after an accident that had befallen him; but I clung to the hope that before my leave expired he would have sufficiently recovered to allow of his joining me and taking me to some of the haunts of his student days, for as a young man he had passed some time there and talked French like a native. But it was not to be.

There is not much more to say about Alderney after I got back there from Paris, and one of my last recollections of the island was when General Elkington, who was commanding at Guernsey and two of whose sons were later to serve under me in the Great War, paid us a visit. It was the Queen's Jubilee summer and the weather was very warm, and I happened to be in the little town when he arrived somewhat later than was expected, as his steamer was delayed. The small volunteer force was drawn up awaiting his coming and the men showed signs of peevishness at having had to stand in the sun for a rather long time. When they were at length called to "attention" and ordered to slope arms the endurance of some of them must have been at an end, for on the command, "Order arms," which followed, I overheard in an audible voice one of them mutter the words, "Order beer, you b——r"; and a little earlier I noticed another in the rear rank swing his rifle round and hit a comrade on the back with the butt. I was not surprised when the inspecting general, who had at one time been head of the auxiliary forces, noticed much with which to find fault, for I have never seen a more awkward, undisciplined body of men as graced the parade that day.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### BELFAST AND THE CURRAGH.

NOT long after my return from Paris I was sent to the School of Musketry at Hythe, and while there the state of health of my father grew worse and I had to hasten to Edinburgh, where he died a few days later. On the termination of the Hythe course I rejoined the detachment at Alderney, where we remained till in August 1887 we embarked again on the *Assistance*, which took the regiment to Belfast. There we occupied part of Victoria Barracks, the 1st Battalion of the Queen's Regiment being installed alongside until replaced by the 2nd Battalion the Black Watch some months later.

The officers of these two battalions and those of my regiment were on friendly terms, but it was otherwise with the rank and file of the two kilted battalions. It is difficult to trace to the roots the cause of ill-feeling which rarely or ever extends to the commissioned ranks, and when it does takes a much milder form than lower down the scale. Whether arising from jealousy, some past injury, real or imagined, or racial antagonism, there can be no doubt that when it exceeds friendly rivalry such feeling can only be harmful to the Service. I imagine that our regimental system, which is such a tower of strength in the Army, and in which *esprit de corps* plays so important a part, is responsible and tends to create exclusiveness with its advantages and disadvantages. Not even the Great War has succeeded in eradicating the seeds of ancient hostility, though with the introduction of universal service the day may come when the parochial spirit may give place to greater breadth of mind. Earlier in what I have written I drew attention to the coolness that existed between the two regular battalions of the Gordon Highlanders—in that case only or mainly as concerned the officers—and this I noticed was fostered principally by the least intelligent and more narrow-minded among them; and I stated what steps my

commanding officer took to create a healthier atmosphere. My first experience of what approached almost to hostility between the rank and file of two regiments occurred at Belfast, and it arose as follows.

I was aware of the ancient rivalry that existed between the Black Watch and the Gordon Highlanders and which, I believe, extended to other Highland regiments, but which, so far as I knew, had gone little further than an interchange of repartee of a more or less harmless nature ; but at Belfast on one occasion, which I witnessed, the Black Watch strained relations almost to breaking point, and it happened in this wise.

That battalion had won the final tie in a local football contest, in which the game had been a tough one, and we had run them very close up to the last minute. Unwisely, in their justifiable pride, the winning team, watched by the mass of the men of both battalions, marched round the barrack square, which was common to both, band, pipes and drums, bearing at their head a table on which was displayed the coveted trophy they had won. This was more than flesh and blood could bear, and it was only with the utmost difficulty that our sergeant-major and non-commissioned officers succeeded in preventing an outbreak which would have been serious and might have had deplorable results then and in the future.

Our arrival in Belfast followed a series of riots, and though in that city, more particularly in certain quarters of it, the dividing line between peace and strife, owing to religious differences, was closely drawn, during the two years we were there nothing of the nature of a disturbance occurred, though at certain seasons feeling ran high and threatened to lead to an outbreak among the populace. In other parts of the distressful country matters did not proceed so smoothly, and on one occasion, in 1888, I was despatched with a hundred men to Londonderry. I was not in actual command of the party, though later when I was adjutant of the battalion I discovered a document which disclosed that I had been chosen to "look after" the captain of the detachment, who must have had nearly twenty years' service and had served through the Afghan and South African Wars. He certainly left much to me and did not, though I pointed out at the risk of being

snubbed the desirability of doing so, even travel back to Belfast on completing the service in the same train as the detachment—a misconception of duty which, as the commanding officer of the battalion happened to meet us at the station on our arrival, caused him to be placed on retired pay not long after. So far as I recollect, the officer in question had married a wife not long before, and, like the man in the parable, was too engrossed with his acquisition to concern himself with more important matters.

Although it was to be expected that feelings regarding our presence in the historic city of Londonderry would have been divided, the Highlanders were made welcome, and the "great Highland warpipe" (very different from the local brand of that instrument) played by our two pipers was undoubtedly appreciated.

As it was possible that we might be called upon after the reading of the Riot Act to open fire on the mob, I arranged before our daily assembly at the town hall—which the captain did not attend—where we were held in support of the Royal Irish Constabulary, that four selected marksmen only should, when ordered, use their lethal weapons and that they should aim at the ringleaders.

Since, as I have said, the captain on no occasion accompanied the detachment to the scene of action, the responsibility for whatever might occur would lie with me, I was resolved not to open fire except as a last resort. Fortunately, our visit passed off peacefully, which I do not think had been expected, so much so that on the last evening before the duty came to an end as we marched back to barracks on the right bank of the Foyle we were mobbed by the friendly inhabitants. I had ordered the pipers not to play, thinking thereby to reduce the danger of the crowd being pushed over the parapet of the bridge into the river, but on arriving at it the appeals to "strike up" were so incessant that I gave the order to do so. A little beyond the bridge, which was crossed in safety, we came across a local instrumentalist who was standing in the middle of the road with both his elbows, as is necessary with the Irish bagpipe, squeezing out of his wind instrument of inferior dimensions such notes as it was possible to extract. As we drew near, my pipers, both fine specimens of humanity, speedily drowned the rival musician's tune, on which the

unsympathetic crowd burst into roars of laughter, and the said musician beat a hasty retreat down a side lane. As we passed through the barrack gate and left the mob behind I was surprised to hear them break into three cheers for the Queen, followed by the singing of the National Anthem.

Not long after our return to Belfast I was appointed adjutant of the battalion, postponing, on the advice of my colonel, competing for the Staff College for a couple of years. I should mention that my commanding officer, Lieut.-Colonel Edward Essex, was a most capable soldier who had served in the 1st Battalion and was a graduate of the Staff College. When on the staff in South Africa he had been present at several defeats in the Boer War of 1881, and in the Zulu War had managed to escape from the disaster of Isandhlawa. I have heard it said that no defeat was complete without him; but of his war experiences he never uttered a word.

Not long after I became adjutant I got into hot water through excess of zeal, the circumstances of which were as follows. The season for despatching a draft to join the foreign battalion had come round and we had been ordered to send fifty men to Ceylon. Now it happened that among the rank and file of the battalion there was a fair percentage of what are known as "bad hats," who were a constant source of trouble and had an evil influence on the young soldiers, besides being a discredit to the regiment. The rules regarding the selection of men for service abroad were then not so strictly drawn as later, and no sooner had the order arrived to prepare a draft than I summoned to the orderly room the eight colour-sergeants, as the senior non-commissioned officers of companies were then called. I explained to them what an excellent thing it would be to cleanse the Augean stables, though the purge I contemplated fell short of so drastic an operation, by taking from each company a number of men of whom it was desirable to be rid. These men, on joining the foreign battalion, would find themselves in the minority, surrounded by non-commissioned officers and private soldiers older than they were, and this fact would have the effect of exercising a wholesome restraint on their evil propensities. Needless to say that I said not a word of my intention to my commanding officer, while it may be guessed that the colour-sergeants almost jumped at a proposal which would relieve them of much

trouble and annoyance. A draft on these lines was forthwith prepared amongst which black sheep preponderated ; indeed, in it there was but a single white lamb—the possessor of a good-conduct badge.

An echo of this perhaps trivial incident occurred several years later after I had exchanged into the 1st Battalion, when a corporal one day told me that he had never ceased to be grateful to me for having, much against his will, sent him abroad and removed him from the harmful influence of his civilian friends at Belfast. The consequence of this was that after a time he had turned over a leaf and was now rising in the non-commissioned ranks.

But before the matter reached so distant a stage a boomerang found its way home from the land of spices in the form of a vigorous protest from the commanding officer of the battalion quartered there. In this he complained bitterly that the riff-raff of the 2nd Battalion had been foisted on to him, with the result that the percentage of trials by courts-martial had greatly increased ; the reverse of course, through my action, having been the case in the home battalion.

My colonel pardoned my excess of zeal by which we had profited, and which, taking a long view, proved of advantage to the regiment as a whole ; and having explained to his opposite irate number that his adjutant was young and not very experienced, no more was heard of the matter.

While on the subject of military crime it may be mentioned that the adjutant of a battalion is generally the prosecutor at regimental courts-martial, and the better he is acquainted with the Manual of Military Law—the legal Bible of the Army—the more efficiently should he be able to perform his duties. There are differences of procedure at civil and military courts of justice—the latter being even more in favour of the accused than are the former—but I gained a good deal of useful knowledge, more especially as regards cross-examination, by spending my afternoons at the sittings of the Court during circuits.

The trials which I attended were of many descriptions, ranging from petty larceny to murder, and were sometimes very interesting. For the first and only time I saw a judge assume the black cap at the conclusion of the trial of a jarvey who had beaten his wife to death in particularly brutal circumstances. On this occasion the presiding judge, if I am not



mistaken, was Mr Justice Holmes, whose occasional remarks during trials helped to enliven the proceedings, while at the same time he took care to maintain the majesty of the law.

The battles between counsel and prisoner—or panel, as he was called—when, as in certain cases, the latter had the right to defend himself, I shall not easily forget, for the skill and cunning which these ignorant Irishmen would display in avoiding giving a direct answer or evading a trap set for them were truly surprising.

In a case of rape, the prisoner—a shock-headed, wild looking creature, who, as it proved, was rightly indignant at finding himself in the dock on a trumped-up charge preferred against him by a vindictive woman of most unprepossessing appearance—at a point towards the close of the trial put a question which led to an unwary reply by the pursuer. This was instantly pounced on by him and was followed by a surprised exclamation from the learned judge, the effect of which was such as to bring the proceedings to a sudden conclusion, the prisoner obtaining immediate release “without a stain on his character,” amid roars of laughter from the body of the Court.

While at Belfast the opportunities of enjoying sport were for an adjutant few and far between, for a home battalion was little more than a school for young soldiers preparatory to being sent to join the battalion abroad, and that officer was in consequence mainly engaged in turning out the finished article. Nevertheless, I managed occasionally to get away for a few days' shooting during the winter months, and I visited such places as Glenfarne and Glenarm Castle, and spent one Christmas at Shane's Castle—the property of Lord O'Neill—where we inhabited what had been the stables, for the castle had many years earlier been destroyed by fire. A few years later I was told by a member of the family that even the stables no longer existed, since they too had been burned down during the De Valera régime.

But the time of our stay in the north of Ireland was drawing to a close, and in the summer of 1890 we moved to the Curragh, where Lord Ralph Kerr commanded the district and Major-General George Moncreiff the infantry brigade. Both generals, being Scotsmen, looked with favour on my regiment,

and for some time, while his official residence was being made ready for occupation, Lord Ralph lived in our mess.

In those days the Curragh of Kildare was a kind of Alder-shot, and was a popular station as hunting in the neighbourhood was inexpensive. For the men, however, there were few attractions, as this was long before the days of cinemas, and such as there were had to be home manufactured. But there was one excitement which at times set the whole military population in a turmoil, the memory of which can still stir me. It arose in this manner. The greater part of the officers and men were located in wooden huts, which it was said had been constructed about the time of the Crimean War. In winter they were cold and draughty, and in summer at times insufferably hot; and in the present day, when cigarette smoking is so widespread, not to say excessive, and burning stubs are thrown about regardless of consequences, these wooden structures would have been far more dangerous than they were fifty years ago.

In order to minimise the risk of fire spreading from one blazing hut to its neighbours there were screens made of corrugated iron mounted on wheels, and these were dragged to the scene of action by teams of men told off for the purpose, whose oncoming noise reminded one of the combined crash of stage thunder and an express train dashing through a station. The drama, and it was truly one, for in a matter of a few seconds these flimsy inflammable erections with their occupants might cease to exist, would open by the tolling of a bell, quickly followed by the blare of bugles sounding the fire alarm, the clangour of the hurrying screens and the gallop of the provost-marshal's charger when a thrill went through one, recalling that caused by a fire-engine drawn by horses galloping through the crowded streets of London to some conflagration, with its freight of yelling brass-helmeted firemen, while the hansom cabs drove recklessly on to the sidewalks.

At the time my regiment was at the Curragh the 10th Hussars, old friends of the 92nd Highlanders from Afghan War days, arrived. That summer the weather happened to be excessively wet, and though the horses of the regiment stood in the open almost up to their girths in mud one could not help admiring the way they would turn out to take part in a field day as if the mud was of no consequence. Their

colonel was Lord Downe, who had come to them from the Life Guards, and he was a good deal more than a "spit-and-polish" commander. With the regiment was Prince Edward of Wales, whose equerry was Julian Byng, who in later years rose to the command of an army in the war of 1914-18 and became Governor-General of Canada. The Prince liked the bagpipes and used sometimes to dine at our mess on guest nights when the pipers played; and one little imagined that he would not succeed to the throne in due course.

One evening the Prince, accompanied by his equerry, was dining with the wife of one of my brother officers, and among the guests, who included myself, was the beautiful Miss Armytage-Moore, later Priscilla, Countess Annesley, a dear friend who, I regret to say, has passed on since I began to write these memoirs.

After dinner our hostess, who possessed no small skill in interpreting the lines on hands, retired to a corner of the drawing-room and examined the palms of the Prince. Other guests, desirous to look into the future, had their hands examined, but in their cases the procedure was of a less private nature. A few days later, when paying an after-dinner call on my hostess, she confided to me in strict confidence that when studying the Prince's palms she had been shocked—since she was a convinced believer in chiromancy—to note that his life-line was short and ended abruptly, which made her feel sure that he was threatened by some illness or accident.

As I was a sceptic concerning the forecasts of palmists I paid no heed to what she said, but not many months after, sad to say, her untoward prevision came true.

At this time I was hard at work for the Staff College examination, which I passed, obtaining the sixth place on the list; and I joined at Camberley on 2nd February 1892.

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### ERRATUM.

Page 58, line 3—"Prince Edward of Wales" *should read* "Prince Albert Victor, elder son of Prince Edward of Wales."

which was the text-book on that subject when I was a cadet at the Royal Military College.

I saw a good deal of him, as for a year I was in charge of the officers' mess, in which, as well as in other more important matters, he was interested. He was succeeded by Colonel H. J. T. Hildyard, and both of them took part in the operations for the relief of Ladysmith in 1899.

General Clery, who had a marked brogue and possessed the Irishman's eye for a horse, was known to my brother officer, Captain Hon. Frederic Gordon, who was at the College at the same time as myself. They had served together in the Sudan, and Gordon told me that on one occasion the general, then a major on the staff, had during an action, when the troops, as was customary when fighting against the Sudanese, were arranged in square formation, appeared dressed in a red tunic and not in khaki like the rest of the troops. It is perhaps unnecessary to point out that in doing so he ran a far greater risk from the spears and bullets of the Mahdi's followers than had he garbed himself like everyone else.

When I joined the College I was still a subaltern, for promotion in the Gordon Highlanders at that time was slower than in most foot regiments, though otherwise in the cavalry; but on the 9th April 1892 I was gazetted captain, with a welcome, though not excessive, augmentation of my pay.

The atmosphere of the College was congenial to me, and I made several enduring friendships. The comradeship and good feeling engendered among a set of officers from the various arms of the Service, many of whom, like myself, had been adjutants of their units, can have had no other than a good

effect towards the working of the staff as a body. Thus when the General Staff was created after the South African War—during which there was jealousy among certain of the commanders of the different columns in their desire to further their own interests—I felt that a step had been taken in the right direction. I was, however, mistaken, for the *esprit de corps* of neither the General nor Administrative Staffs sufficed to keep jealousy and self-seeking in check among a considerable number of the generals in the Great War, though as regards the staffs themselves I noticed less of those imperfections.

The leave granted us in the summer of 1892 I spent mostly at Beuzeval, not far from Trouville in Normandy, *en pension* with the family of a Protestant pastor in order to brush up my conversational French, and the presence of a *maître d'armes* gave me an opportunity, not only to continue fencing lessons, but talk the language of the country. Among his clients were several cavalry officers, and I was amused to notice their snobbish attitude towards a British infantry officer, which seemed to indicate that there was an absence of comradeship between the different arms of the French Army, though I had read that that was not the case. The *maître d'armes* told me that it was a pleasure to deal with a pupil who paid attention to his instructor and did not, like his French clients, maintain that they knew as much or more about fencing than he did.

After a short time I found that I could not endure the simple life and fare of the French family, so I transferred myself to an hotel near the casino; and I was not sorry to return to England, where I joined my family in Wales.

In my day at the Staff College it was the custom, and I believe still is, for the students to collaborate or share in certain work by forming syndicates, as such combination of effort facilitated labour. In this connection I formed part of a syndicate which consisted of myself, Rawlinson, Snow, and Henry Wilson—all of whom were destined to make their mark later on and none of whom except myself is alive.

I imagine that the life we spent at the College was little different from what it is at the present day. Besides studies we had the drag-hounds (now, I imagine, abolished). In summer there was cricket, the captain of the eleven being Hubert Hamilton; but lawn tennis and golf did not then

hold the same place in the calendar of sports as they now do. One of the events which I particularly enjoyed was a visit to the battlefields of the Franco-Prussian War; and the party with which I went were fortunate to be in charge of Colonel Lonsdale Hale, who was an ex-professor and took the place of one of the permanent staff of the College. After he retired from the Army he had settled at Camberley, and he used to help some of the students in their work. He had an intimate acquaintance with the 1870-71 war, and the graphic way in which he described the battlefields which we visited daily, where so many gallant officers and men lay buried and where the ground which they had stubbornly held was still marked by little wooden crosses, impressed on my mind lessons which I shall never forget.

Some years later when, as War Office representative on the Council of the Royal United Service Institution, we were again associated, Hale being chairman, I was able through the good offices of my relative, the Secretary of State for War, to obtain for the old colonel a knighthood as some recognition for what he had for many years done towards helping students at Camberley in their work. I happen to know that the honour he received was not at first welcomed, but as he had seen no active service and had not been mentioned in despatches he was not eligible for the K.C.B., which doubtless he would have preferred. In any case, pleased or not, he never knew that I had had a finger in the pie.

My final term at the College ended in December 1893, but some time earlier I had arranged an exchange with an officer who was serving with the 1st Battalion of my regiment in India. My old colonel, Sir George White, had by this time risen to be Commander-in-Chief in that country, and, having been twelve years at home, I was anxious to serve abroad, and if possible see active service, the prospects of which in the East seemed to be perennial. Several times I had tried in vain to get employment in the field, not only in Egypt but also in Bechuanaland, and I dreaded the thought that, were I so fortunate as to reach the rank of general, I might do so with not a medal ribbon on my coat—that is to say, in a condition which the rank and file used aptly to call “bald breasted.” That, however, was not to be my fate, though I did not foresee it, for before my time came to retire from

the Army I was to take part in seven campaigns in different regions of the world, and an eighth campaign if I include the small share I took in the recently concluded war, and pass some ten years of active service in the field.

The exchange which I was negotiating was effected, and on the 30th January 1894 I went to Dublin, there to take charge of a draft of my regiment which was under orders to proceed to India to join the battalion to which I had been transferred.

A small detail that comes to my mind as I write of the last time I was in Ireland is that it was at Dublin that I discarded the old-world nightshirt and adopted pyjamas, as I was aware that the former garment was not worn in India.

## CHAPTER X.

### I GO TO INDIA.

ON 2nd February—rather a landmark in my career—the draft, 118 strong, was railed to Queenstown, and on arrival there I found to my dismay that half a gale, or what to me seemed almost a hurricane, was blowing. There we boarded an old Cunard Company vessel, the *Bothnia*, which was to carry us to the East. She was acting as an auxiliary troop-ship and was ill-suited to the hot weather which we were certain to encounter after reaching Port Said. I shared an inside cabin with Captain Tidswell of the Lancashire Fusiliers, an admirable stable companion ; and as at that time electric fans were not provided the heat in the passage through the Red Sea was most trying.

No sooner had we left the shelter of Queenstown harbour than we found ourselves in the thick of the storm. For two days and nights I did not go near my cabin, but lay more or less a helpless wreck in the promenade deck smoking-room. During the voyage the only way I could survive the duty of going round the troop decks without being violently sick was by saturating a handkerchief with eau-de-Cologne which I kept pressed to my mouth and nostrils, whereby the fetid atmosphere which pervaded all decks not open to fresh air could be neutralised. After we had passed through the Bay of Biscay the voyage became pleasanter, one might almost say enjoyable.

The purser of the ship, Lancaster by name, on whom we depended for a good deal of our comfort, was a great favourite, and we were destined to meet again about ten years later, when he held the same post on one of the latest vessels of the Cunard Line.

On our way through the Mediterranean we touched at Malta—that truly called island of “ smells, bells, and yells ”—where I ran across several friends, as well as a retired major of my regiment.



On board our ship there was a good lot of officers, among whom was Captain Marshall of the Sherwood Foresters, adjutant of the ship, who later distinguished himself as a commander in Mesopotamia and, like myself, became a G.C.M.G. With my draft was Lieutenant Craufurd (now Sir Charles), a kinsman of General Robert Craufurd of the Light Division, who was on his way to join my regiment and who in later years travelled much in the East and became proficient in several oriental languages.

Among the other officers there was one, Captain G. A. Keef of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, whom I must not omit to mention, as he proved to be a fund of amusement to all on board. He was witty, had a keen sense of humour, and was decidedly original and eccentric, and I fancy not exactly *persona grata* with those under whom he served. Daily, when the several detachments paraded on the quarter-deck for inspection, he would place himself at the head of his men as they marched to their allotted space, playing on a penny whistle the regimental or some other tune. From him I gained much information regarding India, besides hearing at first hand accounts of incidents in his military career, the truth of which was later corroborated by certain of his brother officers and which, though during them he managed to keep within the law, must have exasperated his seniors, especially those who did not possess his sense of humour.

One of these incidents occurred when his commanding officer, for whom he felt neither respect nor affection, ordered him to appear mounted on parade, when as a captain he possessed neither a horse nor drew forage allowance. Of course, every officer in India is usually possessed of a pony and saddle, and would as a rule be glad to be invited to ride on parade. Keef, however, made no attempt to borrow a charger, but on the day before the parade went to the bazaar and selected from among the numerous *tats* (ponies) there the shaggiest, mangiest, and most starved-looking animal he could see amongst those offered for hire. Having borrowed a complete set of military horse furniture, the steed, therewith accoutred, not to say overburdened, was seen next morning being hauled on to the parade ground by a half-naked boy. Eventually, after a struggle, the pair arrived at the flank of my friend's company where, in full view of the battalion, he

was seen deliberately going through the process of mounting the sorry steed in strict riding-school fashion. This accomplished, the rider proceeded to place himself at his correct post, heels down, head up, and sword at the "carry," with a visage a good deal more serious than were the faces of the rank and file with whom he was justly popular.

On another occasion he played his pranks on a higher plane, for when a brigade order had been issued which directed officers to carry field-glasses—these not being a free issue to the Army—he borrowed from the battalion signallers a lengthy telescope. When the time came to observe the imaginary enemy, Keef threw himself at full length on the ground well in front of his company and, after extending and adjusting the instrument, which he rested on a pair of tripods, was observed intently scanning the country with it for miles around in search of the imaginary enemy.

Yet another time, when he was in command of the fort at Attock on the Indus, where he had several minute detachments of artillery and infantry, he, on the day of inspection, treated his small force as if it were a brigade. It was drawn up in line with the regulated intervals, officers mounted on ponies in front of their respective portions, and, when the inspecting officer arrived, Keef went through the whole gamut of words of command appropriate to an occasion on the larger scale. I imagine from what he said when relating the tale of the Attock inspection that he knew beforehand that he would run no risk in giving it a humorous air or he would hardly have risked staging it as he did.

The voyage was pursued in customary manner, the most pleasant part of it being when passing through the Suez Canal, and on the 25th February we reached Karachi, where we remained for a few days and I obtained that necessary article—a bearer. Karachi, where there was generally a comparatively cool breeze blowing from the sea, was then and for some years the disembarking place for drafts proceeding to join units in the Punjab, and I was not to see it again for twenty-two years. From it the journey was continued by rail, halting at prepared camps by day and travelling by night when it was much cooler. The last place at which we halted after four days was Mean Meer, where I had a tremendous clean-up of the draft, as I intended, in spite of the few facilities for improving

the turn-out of the men, to strike the 1st Battalion by their smart appearance.

When we arrived next day at Rawul Pindi I was not disappointed on that score, for it came to my knowledge that the opinion was that no cleaner or more smart-looking draft had joined the battalion within memory. I remember feeling when I heard this that I owed it some reparation for the riff-raff which several years earlier I had been responsible for sending to join it in Ceylon.

## CHAPTER XI.

### RAWUL PINDI AND THE MURREE HILLS.

THE commanding officer of the 1st Battalion was Lieut.-Colonel Gildea, who had been transferred from the Seaforth Highlanders, as some of the senior officers of the battalion had not been considered fit to command it. Before long he and I became fast friends, and he was one of the most understanding and human commanding officers under whom I served; and, moreover, he had no fear of general officers. This is not a very common trait, so far as I have observed, and I am sure that it is an advantage for a young officer to have served as aide-de-camp, as it has the benefit of showing him that even generals are not without weak spots in their armour and after all are but human beings.

When I arrived at Rawul Pindi nothing particular was in progress, but the annual battalion rifle meeting soon took place—when I won the first prizes for officers in both rifle and revolver shooting. This I noticed did not please some of my brother officers, who prided themselves on their skill as big-game shots.

A little time passed when part of the battalion, headquarters and the band and pipes, marched to Thobba in the Murree Hills, where training could be carried out in a way that was impossible in the great heat of the plains during the summer months. I much enjoyed this march, in which I was detached from the battalion and acted as escort to a brigade of mountain artillery. The scenery was fine, and as we rose higher and higher each day the atmosphere grew delightfully fresher and the surroundings lost the parched look of the plains. On reaching our hill-station, which was merely a strip of ground on the hillside dotted here and there with fir and other trees, it became evident that there was much work to be done, for the ground had to be levelled, tents pitched, and, as there was no flat space of any extent,

a football ground on which fatigue parties toiled for months had to be prepared.

Far more work is done by the British troops who pass the summer in the hills, for in the plains the heat compels one to spend many hours under the roof of a bungalow. Consequently we did a good deal of training at our hill-station, where the ground was well suited for the purpose, though rather steep; and I found that what I had learned at the Staff College enabled me to make the instruction both interesting and useful.

In my day in India the troops were given, besides Saturdays, an extra holiday on Thursdays, and sometimes on those days when little work was done my brother officers and I would make long expeditions on our ponies into the Gullies—that is to say, the line of hills which border Kashmir and stretch east and west of Thobba. The country thereabouts is surprisingly beautiful, and the mighty *deodars* (Himalayan cedars) and other varieties of pinaceous trees about Changla Guli, where there was a school of musketry, recalled the Highlands of Scotland, though on a far grander scale.

I was anxious to fit myself for staff employment as soon as possible, for the P.S.C. is of no value in India unless one has the language qualification, and moreover the chance of getting on active service would be greater than if one relied solely on the chance of one's unit being selected to take part in an expedition.

On reaching Pindi, therefore, I had at once begun to work at Urdu with the aid of the battalion *munshi* or interpreter, but I soon found that he was incapable of explaining the grammar of the language. I was informed that there was a veritable expert at the station in that and other Eastern dialects, by name Atta Mahomed Khan, who during the cold weather gave instruction at Rawul Pindi and in summer transferred himself and his family to Murree, which was some six miles distant from Thobba. Besides a monthly fee for instruction, his share of the plunder was the whole Government money award—some hundred rupees—which the successful candidate gained. I accepted his terms, and thanks to his tuition made good progress towards passing the lower standard test in Urdu, though I lacked colloquial knowledge such as officers who went on shooting expeditions in Kashmir and

Thibet acquired from their *shikaris* or native hunters. However, though I felt some diffidence, I was persuaded by the *munshi*, who was eager for the money award, to apply to attend the next examination, which would be held at Sialkote on the 7th September. On this occasion luck served me well, for I was fortunate enough to have translated into Urdu one of the two pieces of English which were set; and as I had memorised it and others, as desired by the *munshi* after he had corrected them, I was able to hand in at any rate one faultless specimen of my knowledge of the language, though if compared with the other it might reasonably have caused surprise, if indeed it did not arouse suspicion. Another piece of good fortune was that the officer who conducted the examination—that is to say, the colloquial part of it—happened to have been at the Staff College, but in the term senior to me, and I felt that he tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, for I was distinctly weak in that branch of the language. I was therefore not a little relieved to hear after a few days that I had passed; Atta Mahomed pocketed “with great content” the money award, and I at once began to work for the higher standard, to pass which was essential before obtaining staff employment. My instructor, now discovering in me a keen worker, began to look upon me as a sort of gold mine, and he decided that while I worked at Hindi, which was required for the higher standard, I should devote some time to learning Pushtu, the dialect of the Pathan tribes of the frontier. This, he said, I could easily master, and he had in view the prospect of appropriating the reward for the same.

When we returned to Pindi on the 22nd September, the hot weather having passed, I was attached to the 68th Field Battery for two months, which, together with a like attachment to a cavalry regiment, was part of or an appendix to the Staff College curriculum and had to be completed before the three important letters, P.S.C., were placed after one's name in the Army List.

During the winter Mark Twain, who was touring India, arrived at Rawul Pindi, and I was present on one occasion when he recounted his experiences in the East. Later on the same evening we gave him supper at the club, at which he made an impromptu speech which was much more amusing than his earlier studied lecture. I have a vivid recollection

of his flowing white hair, which gave him a very striking appearance.

That same winter the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, paid the station a visit, and during his stay I was attached as extra aide-de-camp to General Sir William Elles, commanding the district. A few days later my regiment left for Lahore to take part in a great durbar which the Viceroy was to hold there and at which he would meet the Punjab chiefs. Being at the time attached to the artillery I was debarred from accompanying the battalion; but as I knew that my former colonel, the Commander-in-Chief, as well as Sir William Lockhart, who was in command of the Punjab Frontier Force, would be taking part in the function, I decided that by hook or by crook I must get to Lahore.

I was aware that General Lockhart was about to take command of an expedition into Waziristan, which was always one of the most turbulent sections of the frontier, and that if I could manage to make his acquaintance I might fulfil my desire to see active service. There was, however, the obstacle caused by my attachment, which I believed was supposed to be continuous during two months. I therefore went to Sir William Elles, who was always kind, and he gave me a week's leave on the understanding that my attachment should last for so much longer and that would suffice for my purpose.

On the 22nd I arrived at Lahore, where my subaltern, Younger, who in the South African War won the Victoria Cross but lost his life, met me at the station and told me that I had arrived in time to be present at a dinner at the Commander-in-Chief's camp, to which the officers of my battalion had been invited. This seemed to be a good omen; but I did not know whether Douglas Lockhart, who was my kinsman and aide-de-camp to his uncle, was with him or not. Anyhow, I thought I might have the chance of a word with the general, to whom I was not related and whom I did not know by sight. So, taking Younger with me, I went rather early to the Chief's camp, having in mind the proverb of the timely bird and the worm, and my intuition proved to be correct.

When we arrived there was no one in the great tent or *shamiana* in which the guests would assemble before dinner, but a few moments passed when a general officer walked in,

with whose habits of punctuality I was to become acquainted before many weeks passed. As he had with him no aide-de-camp I could only guess who he was ; but I noticed on the right breast of his mess jacket the blue ribbon of the Royal Humane Society for saving life. As I knew that he possessed that medal, this at once gave me a clue to his identity. He was a strikingly handsome man—tall, somewhat stout, and with keen blue eyes that seemed to look you through and which were rather close together.

After saying good evening I mentioned that his aide-de-camp and I were cousins, on which he inquired my name and said that he had heard him talk of me. I then led the conversation to the subject of the coming operations on the frontier and broadly hinted how anxious I was, after twelve years' service at home, to see service in the field. At this juncture other guests began to arrive and I had no more talk with the general.

Next afternoon I happened to be at the entrance of my tent when, followed by his native aide-de-camp, up rode Sir William to call on the regiment in which his elder brother and father of his aide-de-camp had served many years earlier. I offered to take his cards to save him the trouble of dismounting, and as he handed them to me he said, "Haldane, I've made a note of your name and if I can I will not forget to get you on service," and he added impressively, "but don't be too hopeful!" He then rode away and I little thought what a tragedy would happen before the fulfilment of his words.

Next day there was a review of the many troops at Mean Meer. Then came the durbar, at which were many Punjab princes and chiefs, richly attired and heavily bejewelled ; but I noticed that the carriage of one of the former of the highest rank, which was silver-plated, had part of the harness tied up with rope, a blemish which, with better acquaintance with the East, I found to be not uncommon.

The night before I left Lahore, Lord Elgin attended a St Andrew's dinner given by Scotsmen, at which the Viceroy made a lengthy speech, principally interesting to me through his nervous trick of putting his hand under his beard from time to time and pushing it up so as to cover his face.

Next evening I returned to Rawul Pindi and resumed my



attachment to the 68th Field Battery, the major of which was C. A. Anderson, an Irishman, who was generally known as "Paddy Anderson." He was a first-rate officer, beloved by all ranks, a fine horseman and jockey, and a good deal ahead of most officers in culture.

After a few days the battery started its march to Campbellpore, where there was an artillery practice camp; and at that station were quartered an elephant battery and a company of my regiment. The captain of the company, Stewart Lygon Murray, whom I had met immediately before he joined the regiment, was a distant kinsman of mine, and he and I became great friends as we had numerous interests in common.

At the camp there was also "B" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, commanded by Major Coxhead, whom and his four officers I came to know intimately. On the 18th December, when the two batteries, having completed their practice, were on their way back to Rawul Pindi, one of the horse artillery sub-alterns, Pack-Beresford, induced me to ride wheel, centre, and lead on his gun teams on three successive days—an interesting experience for a foot soldier, but not one which I should have cared to attempt at the gallop with the guns of other batteries thundering behind.

My battery commander, who later attained the rank of lieutenant-general, and distinguished himself during the Great War, used sometimes to while away the hours on the line of march by reciting to me snatches of his extensive repertory from different poets; and in later years I found, thanks to his example, that when one has nothing better to think of, it is good not only for one's memory and an aid to overcome sleeplessness, but an inexhaustible source of pleasure to have learned by heart poetry and prose.

The attachment to artillery, which I enjoyed, came to an end, but there still remained a similar period with a British cavalry regiment. This, however, was not to take place for nearly a year, during which I was to share in two expeditions on the North-West Frontier.

In the meantime I resumed my study of languages. As earlier mentioned, the higher standard qualification in Hindustani demanded a knowledge of Hindi, which is written in another character than Urdu and is not, so far as I know, much used in the Punjab, at any rate not by the Army, but

in parts of India farther south. During the months when I was working at it I could not overcome the feeling that I was wasting time on what could never be of the slightest use to me—a fact which did not encourage my best efforts towards its acquisition; but in spite of my imperfect knowledge, and thanks in no small degree to Captain Guy Beatty of the 9th Bengal Lancers (Hodson's Horse), who conducted the examination, I managed to scrape through. Thereafter I put Hindi out of my mind forever, and a little later passed the lower standard in Persian, a far more interesting study, when I gave up working at languages for a time.

On the 5th January of the following year the sad news of the accidental death of Douglas Lockhart arrived, and some time later Colonel Spencer, the Chief Medical Officer of the Punjab Frontier Force, related to me how it happened. It appeared that Sir William Lockhart and his staff, after a march, had reached their camping ground and were about to have lunch. Douglas was lending a hand in pitching his uncle's tent when a shot was fired and he was seen to run round it and then fall to the ground. The whole incident came so suddenly that no one could realise that anything serious had happened, and the doctor said that the aide-de-camp being an amusing fellow, it was imagined that he was playing some prank. It was soon, however, seen that a terrible accident had occurred. Douglas, having discarded his Sam Browne belt, had thrown it down near the tent, when his orderly, picking it up, began meddling with his revolver, which he had removed from the case and which exploded. The bullet had passed through the tent and killed the owner on the far side, shooting him through the heart. Needless to say that Sir William was terribly upset, as were those of the staff with him. When the tragic news reached Rawul Pindi it did not enter my head that what had occurred could have any bearing on my own future, but on the 12th a telegram arrived from Army headquarters by which I was directed to join Sir William Lockhart as orderly officer. Sad as I was for poor Douglas, whose career had been so tragically cut short, I could not help feeling overjoyed at my good fortune, more especially as I knew that the general had three nephews in the Indian cavalry, one of whom he might naturally have preferred to me, whom he had met twice, and then only for a few minutes.

## CHAPTER XII.

### FRONTIER EXPEDITIONS.

WHEN I went a few hours later to Colonel Gildea's bungalow to bid him good-bye I got rather a shock, for on mentioning what brought me I was met by a look of blank astonishment. He professed not to understand or know anything about the telegram which had arrived earlier and, after a few words of explanation from me, he pointed out that the matter required his approval before I could be allowed to go. I was considerably surprised, for I had assumed that an order from headquarters was sufficient without permission having to be obtained from one's colonel. I imagine, however, that he must have been joking, for after a few minutes he became quite pleasant and wished me good luck before starting on my first campaign. I regret to say that when I rejoined the battalion his term of command had expired. Another had taken his place, from whom I was not sure that I would receive consideration.

It was with feelings of elation that I left Rawul Pindi next morning with my servants and three ponies, proceeding by rail to Dera Ismail Khan, where I arrived late the same night, in hopes that I might reach the front before active operations were at an end. After the night attack on the camp at Wana, affairs in Waziristan had quietened down, but I determined to lose not a moment in joining headquarters of the force. The journey that day had seemed very long, and having dined at a station restaurant off what was said to be mutton but proved to be goat's flesh, we arrived at the Indus. This we crossed by a lengthy, rickety bridge of boats, when I found myself at Dera Ismail Khan—sometimes called "Dismal Khan" by its British inhabitants. The cantonment looked singularly picturesque under the light of a brightly shining moon, and without loss of time I made my way to the office of the station staff officer. He was a married man and, I was informed, had just retired for the night, as I found

when his bungalow was reached; but I ruthlessly told his bearer to rouse him, and I got a promise that a *tonga* (a two-wheeled vehicle) would be ready at six-thirty next day for the further prosecution of my journey. After arranging for my ponies to follow, I started at the hour named with my servants along the lengthy, straight road towards the foot-hills, which became visible as we got clear of the cantonment and the sun rose over the horizon. Though more than forty-five years have passed since that morning I have not forgotten the feeling of exhilaration that stirred me as, with a range of purple-tinted hills ahead, the ponies of the *tonga* galloped along the dusty road through the chill air in the direction of the North-West Frontier, so familiar to me by name and soon to be much better known.

After covering forty-one miles with many changes in teams we reached Tonk Fort, whence we continued to Kot Kirgi, where there was a small post of native cavalry with an Indian officer in command. Here I was given to understand in Urdu, in which I was by no means fluent, that I could go no farther except with an escort of five sowars. This proviso was necessary after 3 P.M., owing to darkness and the risk of traversing a ravine where passers-by were wont to be sniped. However, I managed to persuade the native officer to provide me with a mount, and I started off with one sowar, having arranged for the other four to accompany my servants and baggage, which would catch me up at my destination.

We rode through what in Scotland is called a glen, keeping to the almost dried-up bed of a stream, and arrived at Jandola Fort, a defensive work typical of many other fortified barracks with which I was soon to become acquainted. Here in command of a detachment of the 4th Punjab Infantry was an officer, Captain Schofield, whom I recognised as having been at Sandhurst with me, but whom I had not known there.

At the fort there were a few other officers and, having nothing to do, I used daily to accompany one of them, Captain Baumgartner—who later, I believe, dropped his Swiss patronymic and adopted that of Percy—who had charge of the signalling post on a hill near the fort. Through this link in the communication system the troops at the front were kept in touch with Sheikh Budin, a prominent hill which rises out

of the valley of the Indus whence telegraphic messages were despatched to India proper.

While waiting impatiently at the fort I tried to get leave to proceed to the headquarters of the expeditionary force, but was informed that I must wait until a convoy of provisions, which I was to accompany, left for the front. On the 26th January this convoy, under command of Colonel Dyce of the 33rd Punjab Infantry, left Jandola for Khundiwam, where I spent two nights with Brigadier-General Penn-Symons, who was in command of the infantry brigade there, his staff officer being Major Colin Mackenzie, who, as well as his two younger brothers, had been at the Edinburgh Academy with me. Thence I proceeded to Wana where the headquarters of the expedition, or, as it might more correctly be called, "delimitation force," were, and reported myself to Lieut.-Colonel A. R. Martin, the chief staff officer. On the personal staff of Sir William Lockhart at this time were Freddie Roberts (son of the field-marshal) and George Barrow (later General Sir George), the latter, like me, orderly officer, the former aide-de-camp in place of Douglas Lockhart. The tragic death of my cousin had cast a gloom over the mess, and it was evident that Sir William Lockhart felt the loss of his nephew very keenly.

I soon gathered that the expedition was nearing its close and that it was likely to be a bloodless affair, the principal reason for its having been undertaken being to demarcate the frontier near where we were. Just before the work began the camp at Wana had been subjected to a night attack by the local tribes, and casualties had resulted on both sides. Its disposition had no doubt been carefully noted by the various tribesmen, whom the political officer with the force was constantly interviewing, and the general had since moved his tents to a little distance, where he would not be under the continual observation of the ill-disposed.

During this expedition there had up to this point been little opportunity for gaining knowledge regarding frontier warfare, except what I could glean through associating with experienced officers like Colonel Martin, who was always ready to impart all he knew on the subject. Still, military precautions had to be taken, despite the improbability of our being molested either on the march or in camp, and such precautions were somewhat different from those practised in

civilised warfare which, I think, were then the only ones dealt with in our military text-books.

On the 9th February I was relieved to hear that I had passed the higher standard examination, which would qualify me for employment on the staff in India, though, as it turned out, I was never to derive that advantage. On the same date Captain Credner of the German Army, an instructor at a cadet school at Karlsruhe, arrived to be attached for a short time to Sir William's staff. He was an unmilitary-looking man of insignificant appearance who, it seemed, was spending his leave in India.

Three days later we began our return march to civilisation, as the delimitation party no longer required the presence of a strong force to protect it. As Colonel Mason, the chief intelligence officer, and Captain Hunter-Weston, R.E., who was in command of the Engineers, proposed to ride through the gorge of the Gomal River instead of over the Ghileri Pass by which the general, his staff and the troops would march, I got leave to accompany them. On our way the river had to be crossed many times, as it wound its course through the defile, but being winter it was not a torrent but an inconsiderable obstacle. On the precipitous side of the left bank one could see the marks made by a prospecting party which showed roughly the line that would be followed by a railway should the time ever arrive for one to be constructed ; but such a line and other projected schemes have not yet materialised.

As we drew nearer to the Indus it was a relief to the eyes to see, after several weeks of living amid dried-up frontier hills, the fresh green cultivation that borders the great river.

For a few days the march continued, till on the 17th, when Sir William and some of his staff went to Dera Ismail Khan, with the intention of moving thence to Bunnu before proceeding up the Tochi Pass, which was to be our next objective. So far no force had penetrated that portion of the frontier, although it had occasionally been entered by Europeans, and it was supposed to be suitable as a route for a railway into Afghanistan, but this was soon found not to be the case.

Daily as we advanced into this little-known territory, I used to accompany the cavalry of the advanced-guard, which met no opposition, though at night we were sometimes disturbed by firing into camp due to snipers. Sir William, who

had a facile pen, disliked the colloquial name given to these disturbers of the peace, and in his despatches directed that the word "sharpshooters" should be substituted for it. Had he lived a few years longer he might have overcome his dislike for the colloquialism, for it came to my knowledge later when reading John Fortescue's 'History of the British Army' that the word had been used in India a century earlier by our troops during the siege of Baraoch in the Bombay Presidency. They were in the habit of placing their head-dresses as a mark for the enemy's rifle fire, and to this practice they gave the name of "sniping." When in Flanders in 1915 I was preparing a pamphlet regarding the 3rd Division, which I then commanded, it came to my knowledge that the objectionable word had been current with our men in the Crimean War, so that its use cannot be said to be a modern innovation.

While we were passing through this almost unknown territory I for the first time met Charles Bruce, the mountaineer of Mount Everest fame, and occasionally accompanied him and his Gurkha scouts on their expeditions. One evening when we had gone some way up the Tochi and were at dinner he looked into the mess tent and whispered in my ear that he was just starting to try to catch some snipers who, after dark, kept firing into the camp where we then happened to be, and he suggested that I might care to join him. Leave being given, we started off along a path which led into the hills and lay in ambush a mile or so from the camp. All that happened, however, was that two hours later the spot where we lay was fired into, for we must have been overheard on our way to it, and there was nothing to be done but return whence we came, empty-handed.

The limit of our advance up the pass brought us to Sheranni, where the valley narrowed, and it was obvious that the route was unsuitable for a railway to the border of the Amir's territory. While at Sheranni I had a rather strange experience, which might have had an unfortunate ending. When shooting one early morning in company with Colonel Martin I hit a sand grouse, which fell dead on the side of a cliff, and to pick it up I started climbing up the steep face. Before doing so I left my gun on the ground, muzzle upwards, as to carry it would have impeded my movements. I had nearly reached the bird when, looking downwards, I noticed the gun was shifting

its position, and a moment later it gave a jump and both barrels exploded simultaneously, the shot whistling past me, unpleasantly near. The gun, when retrieved, was found to be damaged beyond repair, while the owner was fortunate to escape damage. At the time this happened my companion was some way off and out of sight, and it occurred to me that had I been killed by the shot and fallen to the foot of the cliff it might have been concluded that I had committed suicide.

We spent several days at the Afghan end of the pass, and just as we were about to withdraw a heliograph message arrived which brought news of an outbreak on the frontier at a considerable distance to the north of where we were. This stated that Chitral Fort was besieged and several British officers had fallen by treachery into the hands of a troublesome chief, Umra Khan of Jandol. The news was exciting and raised hopes of more active operations than those in which we had been engaged, and it seemed that, as speed was an important matter, our force might be shifted to the north and after reinforcement be employed in undertaking the relief of the beleaguered garrison. This seemed the more likely, since Sir William Lockhart some years earlier had led into Chitral territory a reconnoitring party, so that he knew well that section of the frontier. Disappointment was to follow for him and all of us, for we soon learned that two divisions as well as line-of-communication troops were being mobilised, and another general, Sir Robert Low, was to be in command. We now moved to Bunnu, where it was learned that my regiment was to form part of what became known as the Chitral Relief Force.

There was now no reason why I should remain with Sir William Lockhart, active operations being at an end, so I asked him to allow me to rejoin my regiment, where I should probably be wanted. On receiving his consent I started for Pindi, and at the station there was met by my subaltern, who did not know whether I was among the officers who would proceed with the battalion on the coming expedition, so I made my way to the commanding officer's bungalow. I have mentioned that the period of command of Colonel Gildea expired while I was serving with the Waziristan Field Force and, though I was on quite good terms with his successor,



I knew that for some reason he had a prejudice against 2nd Battalion officers, and on my journey back I had received a somewhat cryptic telegram from the adjutant. I was in consequence in doubt regarding my fate, but I was soon to be enlightened, for I found that he had recalled the Irish officer whom I mentioned some time earlier. The officer in question was holding a temporary staff appointment elsewhere than at Pindi and was a favourite of Colonel Mathias, and in his absence, during which he had drawn staff pay, I had been in command of his company. Though the commanding officer was within his rights in doing so, I expostulated at his treatment. Since the company had been under my command, from being the worst shooting one of the battalion it had become the best, and at the district assault-at-arms had represented the regiment. Moreover, I was the only officer who had passed the language tests in both Urdu and Pushtu, had the Staff College P.S.C. to his credit, had been adjutant, and knew almost every non-commissioned officer and man in the battalion, as they had passed through my hands at home. But in vain; so, not wishing to work behind his back, I made it clear that I felt my career was at stake and that I should move heaven and earth to go on the expedition. I will not relate the many steps I took to gain my ends; but he was master of the situation and there was no way of overcoming the obstacle in my path. I saw the general commanding at Rawul Pindi, however, who was sympathetic and said that he would write to Mathias and advise him to take me in the place of some junior officer, since there was a possibility of heavy fighting. He said that he himself would approve of such a course, which would be to the advantage of the Service. I imagine that the general's intervention only helped to harden Mathias's heart after the manner of Pharaoh of old, for he did not yield any more than did the Egyptian.

I may here mention that some years later Mathias urged me to help him to get an appointment, and I did what I could, but did not succeed. I have no wish to parade my virtues, but I have never in my life allowed personal feelings or prejudices to influence me to the disadvantage of another and have striven to be scrupulously fair rather than be tempted to pay off old scores when the chance of doing so presented itself.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE RELIEF OF CHITRAL.

ON the 28th March the battalion left for the front, but I had not the heart to go to the station to see it off. Moreover, knowing what my company thought, I considered that it would be wiser to keep away in case of a demonstration of their feelings at a moment when they might have few scruples in expressing them audibly. Such behaviour could do me no good in the eyes of the commanding officer, might even have an adverse effect and tend to reduce any chance of my getting to the front.

The departure of the battalion was followed by the closing of our mess, and for some weeks I lived with that of my friends of "B" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery. There one evening I met for the first time Major Horace Smith-Dorrien of the Sherwood Foresters, with whom I was to become better acquainted in years to come.

In the meantime my regiment had been in action and had taken part in the capture of the Malakand Pass, the first obstacle on the way to Chitral. It was in this action that Colonel Doyne, who commanded the 4th Dragoon Guards, to which regiment I was later to be attached in order to complete the Staff College curriculum, figured as an infantryman. It happened in this wise.

Doyne, an Irishman, and therefore keen to take part in a "scrap," was nearing the termination of his period of command and career in the Army and had never had a chance of seeing active service. Now there seemed for the first and last time an opportunity to do so, for Rawul Pindi was within reach of the scene of the coming frontier operations. Keeping his intentions secret, except from his adjutant, he borrowed the uniform of a private soldier of the King's Own Scottish Borderers—a battalion of which regiment formed part of the garrison and which was to share in the expedition—and

armed with a carbine and with pockets filled with ammunition made his way to Nowshera. Reaching that station on the railway to Peshawar, where the expeditionary force was "debarking" from trains, he went to the bridge over the Kabul River. There, to his dismay, he noticed the station staff officer from Rawul Pindi, who, of course, knew him well by sight and otherwise, and who was watching the troops as they filed past him. However, the gallant colonel was not to be defeated and solved the question of concealment by slipping into the ranks of the regiment which he had selected to cloak his design and of which he had, unknown to its commanding officer, constituted himself a supernumerary and temporary member.

Continuing with the Borderers, with whom he passed a few days and nights, he took an active share in the attack on the pass, after which he returned to his peace station. His exploit, however, came to the ears of the authorities—some of whom went so far as to describe it as "murder"—but to the best of my recollection nothing seriously affecting what remained of his Army career resulted, for which his many friends, including myself, were considerably relieved.

All this time I was striving to possess my soul in patience, a virtue of which I have ever been deficient, hoping against hope that something would "turn up." As the days grew warmer orders arrived that the depot of the battalion which I commanded was to move to Gharial in the Murree Hills, and on the 25th April the three days' march there began. When we left in the early morning we were accompanied by a regular pack of tag, rag, and bobtail—in fact, by dogs of every description and species, though to what species some of them belonged it would have been difficult to determine, for the majority might have been termed illegitimate. These tikes were the property of the various companies of the battalion whose owners, not being permitted to take them to the front, had perforce left them with their comrades.

Before the depot started for the march I had no conception what a canine menagerie was possessed by the battalion, and it was a real pleasure and amusement to watch them, many in the open country for the first time in their lives, tearing ahead through the dust and nosing into unfamiliar objects and smells.

On the third day's march an incident occurred which, had it ended unfortunately, might have ruined my chance of joining my regiment at the front. We had reached Tret, the second camping ground on the way to Gharial, and, as was the custom, the baggage of the battalion—all of which I had with me—was sent ahead at nightfall with an escort, so as not to delay the next day's march, which was a rather long one on the steepest part of the route.

The previous year a native had been shot dead between Tret and Murree by a soldier of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, some companies of which were on their way to the hills under the command of my friend, Major Keef; and as I was determined to avoid a repetition of such a catastrophe I personally warned the baggage-guard before it marched off that on no pretext was a rifle to be fired during the night through any alarm of *loosewallah* (robber) who might be thought to be on plunder bent. I told the men—with whom there would be no officer, I being the only one with the depot—what had happened the year before, and impressed on them that if by chance anyone were to lose his life through their action the slayer could expect no mercy and would run the risk of being hanged. I mention what might be regarded as a trivial matter, as events were to show that I had good reason for my prevision.

The party marched off a few minutes later, and when the main body which I accompanied duly arrived shortly after daybreak next morning at Sunnybank—a spot where there was a supply depot and where the roads to Thobba and Murree diverge from the main route to Kashmir, which passes close to Gharial—I was met with a disconcerting piece of news. Standing outside the supply shed (godown) was a conductor of the Commissariat Transport Corps, whom I recognised as having been attached to our headquarters in Waziristan. He told me that that morning before it was quite light he happened to be about and while watching the baggage pass the godown he noticed two coolies cross the road and proceed down the *khud* (hillside), carrying between them, slung on a pole, a large packing-case. Thereupon one of the baggage-guard, comparatively speaking an old soldier, who should have known better, oblivious of my warning, had out of pure mischief called to a young soldier who was a little way ahead that the

coolies were *loosewallahs* and had urged him to fire at them. The thoughtless fellow had thereupon loaded his rifle and fired at the coolies, who dropped the case and bolted down the hill.

Fortunately, neither of the natives was hit—a fact which lifted a considerable weight from my mind. There still, however, remained the possibility that if the incident should come to the knowledge of the Press they might, owing to the publicity given to the case of the previous year, make use of such “copy” as this promised to be. As this step, should it lead to the assembly of a court of inquiry, might effectually block any chance of my getting to the front—for I had by no means lost hope of that event—I took steps at once to have the matter hushed up.

As regards the young soldier who had fired at the coolies I let him off lightly, though he was guilty of disobeying orders, since he had acted thoughtlessly at the instigation of the older man, whose identity, fortunately for him, I failed to discover.

Two days after we arrived at Gharial to my great satisfaction I received a telegram by which I was ordered on relief by an officer from the front to join the battalion, and after bidding good-bye to Sir William Lockhart, who was now in command of the Punjab Army, with headquarters at Murree, I hastened to Rawul Pindi. I must mention that the day I left Gharial a young officer from home had joined my detachment and I left him to hand over to the officer who was expected from headquarters of the battalion.

In due course and without further incident I arrived in the Jandol Valley, a place on the line of communication to Chitral where my regiment was camped, and there I learned all that had happened since they had left for the front six weeks earlier.

While at Mundah in the Jandol Valley we were disturbed on most nights by snipers who hung about the camp beyond the line of sentries and who, as we had not taken the precaution of building walls round our tents, managed to kill and wound several of the inmates.

As it seemed probable that we should have to spend the summer in the valley, we began building huts for the battalion with such material as was available, the composition of which

was mostly dried mud. My friend, Murray, whom I mentioned as having met at Campbellpore, and I started a structure of that nature for ourselves, but as events turned out we were not destined to occupy it.

The sniping got worse instead of better, and at length became so troublesome that I asked for and obtained permission to go out one night and attempt to catch or kill certain tribesmen who either fired into the camp or knocked down telegraph posts and removed the copper wire, which was of value to them. I was not permitted to undertake the little expedition with a small party such as Bruce and I had with us on a certain occasion in the Tochi Valley, but was ordered not only to take my entire company as well as a political officer, whose presence could be of no possible service since my mission was of a punitive nature and not one involving negotiations. But orders are orders, however unintelligent they may be, and we started after dark on what I feared would prove to be a fruitless undertaking.

To make a long story short we went a few miles from the camp, keeping as silent as possible, and lay in ambush a little way up a hill round which the track wound. There we remained for some time till at length we heard the noise of a telegraph pole being knocked down, from which no doubt the wire would be removed. The moon was shining dimly and there was a slight mist in the low ground, so I led the company in the direction of the camp, as it seemed probable that the next move of the disturbers of the peace would be in that quarter. I went ahead some twenty paces, revolver in hand, taking with me Sergeant Gilchrist, a trusty non-commissioned officer and marksman whom we shall meet again in South Africa.

We had gone some distance when the sergeant whispered to me that he thought he could see something or someone in front. I do not possess the feline quality of seeing well in the dark, but others who were following, as well as the sergeant, must have noticed something ahead, for almost immediately the sound of the rattle of bolts being drawn and presumably rifles being loaded made me turn back to see what was the matter. I should mention that I had purposely decided to do the business with the bayonet and had no intention of opening fire, which in the dark would probably be ineffectual. The sharp-eared raiders must have heard the

noise, and though the sergeant and I and four men I had with me rushed forward they managed to make off, leaving behind them as proof that they were surprised their precious ammunition pouches and some powder flasks. I think that we had been within an ace of success, and although our mission may not have achieved what I hoped for, that it was not without effect was proved by the fact that firing into camp at night practically ceased.

The hut on which Murray and I were working was soon nearly fit for occupation and we were looking forward to escape living under canvas, which had little effect in minimising the heat of the Indian summer. We had had much difficulty in procuring beams necessary for its construction, which, as well as wood for cooking purposes, had to be collected at some distance from camp. This difficulty could only be overcome by despatching each company in turn to an almost deserted village, which would afford what was required for the dual purpose.

As a rule on the frontier the custom of despatching parties to collect wood is certain to lead to fighting, sometimes of a serious nature, for the tribesmen naturally resent having their houses pulled down and heavy beams, which have to be obtained from afar, removed. With collecting parties it is necessary to send escorts of varying strength, frequently supported by mountain artillery, so as, if possible, to keep the tribesmen at a distance, more especially when the party, its mission completed, withdraws to its camp. As each wounded man who is unable to walk requires two to four stretcher-bearers and perhaps a man to carry his arms and equipment, the little force as casualties increase becomes more non-combatant, and therefore more vulnerable. In the Jandol Valley, however, it happened that most of the male population had left their homes on the approach of the troops, and the few who remained did not interfere with our amateur house-breaking. In consequence, although a watch had to be kept, the work of pulling down the houses could be carried on peacefully. But it was a dirty business, for the houses in summer swarmed with fleas, and I do not exaggerate when I say that I have returned from wood collecting with a broad band of these insects which had made their way under the turnover of my hose-tops—as they are called in Highland regiments. Im-

mediately one arrived back in camp recourse had to be had to a bath to rid oneself of the gorged vermin.

Except for sniping we had a peaceful time in the Jandol Valley, and on the 8th May two companies of the battalion left for the Janbatai Kotal, which is the lowest point for crossing the range of mountains that separates the Jandol and Baraul Valleys. These companies were followed next day by two more and headquarters, so that we gained the impression that those left behind would have to endure the heat and discomfort of the valley throughout the summer. But we were mistaken, for orders came for two more companies to march to Janbatai; and at 3.30 A.M. on the 11th we moved to Kambat, which was twelve miles in the direction of that place. I was not sorry to leave Mundah and even forgo the building which Murray and I had constructed with much trouble, for the temperature in the wooden mess hut had risen to 95 degrees and, there being no *punkah*, existence was becoming trying. Moreover, Murray and I had formed the intention of getting leave to visit Chitral, which was the farthest point reached by the troops under Sir Robert Low.

Next day we arrived at our destination and found the battalion camped near the *kotal*, north of which range after range of mountains succeeded each other until they merged into that of the Himalayas.

We found the *kotal* greatly cooler than below in the plain country, it being some 5000 feet more elevated; and not for a moment did I regret leaving Mundah. On another part of the ridge was the 2nd Battalion Seaforth Highlanders, as well as some mountain guns, and everyone was busily engaged in levelling the ground so as to provide terraces for tents and transport animals or cutting zigzag paths down the north and south sides of the ridge. This work, if only as exercise for the men, was desirable to keep them fit, for route marching was impossible. Some of them who had had gardens at the various stations at which they had been quartered in India had begun to prepare sites for them so as to grow flowers and vegetables, the seeds for which had arrived.

While we were at Janbatai there were, from some undiscovered cause, several cases of enteric fever among the rank and file, some of whom did not recover, and it was found that when the comrades of those who were sick visited them they



sometimes smuggled food into the field hospital, with fatal consequences to the patients. It appears that in the disease of enteritis the victim, as he is on the road to recovery, becomes ravenously hungry and will go to almost any length to satisfy his craving for food. In consequence of the illicit introduction of eatables there were cases of perforation of the intestines, which was followed by death.

We had the melancholy task of burying men who fell victims to the disease ; and I may here relate a rather amusing incident which occurred at the burial of a man of my company. For the sake of discipline and employing the men's time I insisted that when a halt of any duration took place they must turn out as smartly as in peace-quarters, and that belt-plates and brass buttons must be polished for parades. The company was duly drawn up for inspection, prior to proceeding to the hospital and thence to the burial ground, when on passing round the ranks I noticed one man, and one man only, whose buttons had evidently not been approached by a button-stick and brush for quite a long time. I spoke sharply to the delinquent, who blushed and said nothing in excuse, and passed on thinking no more of the matter. But before I finished the inspection my colour-sergeant whispered to me that the man I had reprovved was a volunteer from another company who had come to attend the funeral—and, I imagine, now regretted doing so ! Later I heard that the men of my company had been much amused and had their laugh at the expense of another, the captain of which had at one time been adjutant of the battalion.

No sooner had I reached Janbatai than I took unobtrusive steps to find out if any of my brother officers senior to myself proposed to get leave to visit Chitral, for at this time the Liberal Government which were then in office showed signs of their usual policy of scuttling from the country and, should they do so, there might be no chance of going there if others went first. But I need not have given myself any concern in the matter, since the prospect of so long a journey on foot did not appeal to anyone except Murray and myself.

Leave having been granted, with three mules for our tents, baggage and food, a driver and our two servants, we left the *kotal* on the 17th June and, descending along a track on which we had been engaged, arrived at Bandai in the

Baraul Valley, where there was a company of the Seaforth Highlanders on line of communication duty.

At five-thirty next morning we resumed the march, and on reaching Sarbat were told that at Chasma, a little way farther on, there had been an attack a few days earlier and that seven men had been killed and twenty wounded. As the line of communication was unguarded, except for the various posts on it at several miles interval, we were offered an escort to take us as far as our next halting place, but decided that, as this might cause delay, it would be preferable to dispense with it and take the chance of being molested. We therefore made no stay at Sarbat, but tramped on *via* Chutiatan, near which place the muddy Baraul River and the Panjkora unite, the two currents, one brown and the other icy blue, coursing side by side for a long way before intermingling. The valley through which we marched was wooded and picturesque and, being a fast walker, I found myself continually far ahead of my fellow travellers, whose paces were leisurely. I was obliged to make lengthy halts till they caught me up, but not a soul was to be seen, and even if danger lurked in the shape of snipers they gave no sign of their presence during the whole tour, both going and returning.

We arrived at Dir on the 19th, and as I knew Captain Stockwell, the brigade-major, who had been at Sandhurst with me, and Captain R. Brooke, 7th Hussars, who was aide-de-camp to Brigadier-General Gatacre, we made for their camp on the hillside, and were invited to pitch our tents and dine. The general was suffering from a carbuncle, no doubt the effect of unsuitable food and over-exertion (he was known as General "Backacher" from the way he kept his troops on the move and gave them little time for leisure), and did not come to dinner, but in a talk I had with him he gave me an interesting account of his rapid dash to Chitral to relieve the beleaguered garrison. He said that he could have reached his goal four days sooner than he actually did and before the arrival of Colonel Kelly from the Gilgit side. The general seemed to think, what was probably true, that Kelly, in consideration of the stupendous difficulties which he had had to overcome in his march and the resolution he had displayed in doing so, may have been intentionally allowed to arrive first at the besieged fort.

After a pleasant evening at Dir we started again next morning at 8.15, and four hours later reached Kolandi, whence we went to Sir Robert Low's camp at Mirga, 8000 feet above sea-level, in a pretty wooded glen which lay at right angles to the main valley. Here I found Colonel Craigie, late Highland Light Infantry, who was on the staff and whom I had known when he was quartered at Edinburgh, and again when instructor at the Royal Military College. We were also welcomed by General Bindon-Blood, the Chief of Staff, who later was to do me a good turn, and Colonel Leach, the chief engineer, with whom we lunched.

My companion was by now showing signs of fatigue, and I had a job to get him as far as Gujar, a point a little lower than the summit of the pass and on its south side, where we camped that night. Among the officers there was Colonel O'Sullivan, R.E., presumably of the Roman Catholic persuasion, who after dinner gave us an interesting account of some secret service work which, when some years younger, he had carried out in Madagascar. He had disguised himself as a priest and, helped by his religion, had escaped detection.

In order to give Murray a rest we did not start next day till 2 P.M., when we made our way to the top of the pass, which is 10,250 feet above sea-level, then the highest point on earth to which I had attained. No sooner had we crossed the *kotal* than the aspect of the country entirely changed, and instead of bare hills we found ourselves passing through a beautiful forest glade, where some of the trees were of considerable height and girth. Such a transformation scene is nearly always met on the North-West Frontier of India, and presumably in other countries which have their mountain ranges. On the southern slopes there may be a little scrub, but no sooner does one arrive on the northern side of the hills than one finds that they are clothed with trees and undergrowth, and the scenery becomes vastly different. This is no doubt due to the fact that the extreme heat of the summer prevents the growth of anything of a vegetable nature, while the snow, which is always deeper on the northern side, keeps the soil moist and encourages plant life.

Down the steep track, for it was anything but a road, we journeyed, and I realised the difficulties General Gatacre had

had to overcome in his hurried march to Chitral, though they cannot have approached those encountered by Colonel Kelly, who had been forced to make his way at far greater altitudes and over dangerous passes.

On we went till we reached Ashreth at seven o'clock—a place which might more truly have been named “Dustreth,” judging by the clouds of dust thrown up by gusts of wind that came up from the valley of the Kunar or Chitral River. We were now thirteen miles north of Gujar, a post on the line of communication which was guarded by two companies of the Buffs under Major Moodie, at whose mess we dined, helping out the meal with some of our provisions.

We had meant to move next morning at four-thirty, so as to cover a good distance before dark, but good resolves were sacrificed to Morpheus, and we did not get going till four hours later.

Our route took us that day to Kila Drosh, where we arrived in the evening. Next morning we started up the Shishi River, and after fording it where that was possible returned to the valley through which the main river coursed. Here the track began to wind upwards, until high above the bed of the roaring torrent it seemed to end abruptly on the face of a perpendicular cliff. On getting closer, however, it was seen that native ingenuity had overcome an obstacle which at first sight appeared to make further progress impossible. At a point where not even a mountain goat could have made his way the track was continued by the construction here and there of what are called *paris*. These consist of bridges formed of roughly hewn planks, supported by tree trunks jammed at an angle into the face of the cliff, and so furnishing a species of bracket which allows the passage of pedestrians and baggage animals.

I have mentioned earlier that I am not blessed with a strong head where heights are in question, and when traversing these fragile and narrow bridges, over which I trod Agag-like, I took care to keep as close as possible to the cliff. I did not then know what I was to hear on reaching Chitral, that these *paris* have a way of occasionally subsiding under heavy weights and sending pack-mule and driver hurtling down to a questionable fate in the seething rapids below.

After traversing several of these bracket-like structures

we came to a large supply camp at Gairat, where we passed the night, and next morning pursued our way along the left bank of the river till near our destination. This we reached after crossing the stream, which had become much less rapid and wide than lower down its course, by a rickety-looking bridge constructed on the cantilever principle and guarded by a tower at each extremity. We soon came in sight of the fort, which was a few hundred yards down-stream and which had figured so largely in the Indian and other newspapers shortly before.

This native stronghold, the residence of the Mehtar or petty king of the country, is commanded from the opposite or left bank of the river and is much hidden by fine chenar trees. About a mile beyond it we found the headquarters of the 4th Gurkha Rifles, under command of Colonel Leslie. Here we were most hospitably entertained, perhaps the more so because visitors in so out-of-the-way a corner of the world were few; and a sun-shelter was provided for our accommodation, which proved to be far preferable to an eighty-pound tent. After breakfast we called on Captain Minchin, the political officer, passing on the way to his bungalow a few Chitralis, who looked poor and ill-clad, and dressed as a rule in skins. The men were not by any means good looking, but the women were in many cases decidedly handsome and carried themselves, as is so often the case in the East, in almost stately fashion.

The rest of that day we spent restfully, and in the cool of the evening Captain Minchin called for us, and with him we went to the fort. At the entrance we were met by the Mehtar Shuja-ul-Mulk, a younger brother of Amir-ul-Mulk, a heavy-eyed boy aged about twelve, though he looked older, who shook hands with us. With him were several pretty boy-companions, besides some truculent-looking followers; and from the appearance of the latter one could understand how the headship of the Chitralis had in the past brought with it a speedy passage to another world.

I had gathered earlier that Afzul-ul-Mulk, who was the second son of Aman-ul-Mulk, at one time Mehtar and who had usurped the headship, had been murdered by his uncle, Sher Afzul. The eldest son of Aman-ul-Mulk, Nizam-ul-Mulk, now became Mehtar, and he again was murdered by his

half-brother, Amir-ul-Mulk, who then succeeded, but was deposed by his young brother, Shuja, with whom we had just shaken hands. Such a series of assassinations as had occurred in this remote Chitral Valley it would be hard to beat on the North-West Frontier of India, and they served to demonstrate the savage, revengeful nature of some of the tribesmen with whom the British Government have to deal and their utter disregard of life.

As the fort has been described by others and resembles many such structures on the frontier, I abstain from repeating what has already been written on the subject. One spot in it, however, was of special interest, about which I have a few words to say. It appeared that, situated as the fort was, close to the river, the besiegers, who belonged to the type of people who prefer stabbing in the dark to fighting in the open, aimed at forcing the garrison to surrender through thirst, a method more easily capable of application in the sultry climate of the East than in more temperate regions. At this juncture the Indian *bhisti* (water-carrier), whose devotion to duty, bravery, and self-sacrifice have been so worthily sung by Kipling in his immortal lines, came to the rescue, not for the first time in history. By creeping out through an exit in the mud wall of the fort—a spot well known to snipers across the river and constantly under fire—it was possible, though at great risk, to fill a mussock and crawl back to safety. This spot was readily recognisable by a white stone round which the river coursed in its progress down the valley, and here more than one stout-hearted water-bearer laid down his life for his friends.

Another interesting spot was that from which the besiegers had driven a mine gallery with the intention of blowing down the citadel and gaining access to the fort, which would have meant the almost certain massacre of every soul within its walls. When the sound of underground activities, drowned it is true to some extent by the beating of tom-toms, grew louder and louder as the miners neared their objective, Captain Townshend, the gallant defender of the fort, whose name will always be associated with Kut in Iraq, decided that a sortie must be made. It was then that Captain Harley—later awarded the Victoria Cross—sallied forth at the head of a small party of Sikhs, Gurkhas, and sappers, penetrated

into the mine gallery, blew it in, and effectually put a stop to activities which were placing the garrison in jeopardy.

On the 25th June we somewhat reluctantly bade farewell to our kind hosts, and on our way back to Kila Drosh heard the news that Lord Salisbury had become Prime Minister, and that the Duke of Cambridge had resigned the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Army and was to be succeeded by Lord Wolseley. That night our tents were pitched close to a harmless-looking little stream, but while we were asleep heavy rain fell at a distance and we woke to find ourselves, as it were, marooned, for the water had risen and was flowing all round where we lay. As this resulted in our garments being soaked, our departure had to be deferred till the afternoon, by which time kilts, bedding, and tents had been dried in the hot sun, and we managed to reach Ashreth before nightfall. That night rain again fell, and next afternoon when we arrived at the top of the Lowari Pass it was very cold and the weather had become worse than ever. However, we struggled on down the hill and arrived hungry and rather miserable at General Gatacre's headquarters at Dir. Here we were well looked after, the general himself, who had recovered from his disability, holding my sopping kilt in front of a blazing wood fire, while the owner, wrapped up in one of his blankets, was trying to get some warmth into his bones. After dinner Murray and I went fast asleep on the mess table, the only dry spot available, for the ground was too wet for bivouacking and our tents as well as our kilts had not recovered from the drenching to which they had been subjected. Two days later we were back again at the Janbatai Kotal, where we remained till the 9th August, when the battalion started on the march which would bring it some weeks later to its peace station.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### RAWUL PINDI—LEAVE TO ENGLAND.

THREE weeks after we returned to Rawul Pindi my attachment to the 4th Dragoon Guards began, on completion of which I would become a full-blown graduate of the Staff College. At this season of the year promotion examinations for tactical fitness were taking place and I was in frequent request to act as staff officer to the examinees. In every case those on whose side I acted passed the test, but there were some lame ducks among them who required prompting, and I trusted that their having crossed the Rubicon through my agency might not later on, should they command troops in the field, lead to disaster.

When the autumn came I was invited to become secretary of the committee of the annual Rawul Pindi District assault-at-arms, a function of the nature of the Royal Military Tournament held at Olympia, but with much less of the circus element about it. A few days after I had begun the work I had the misfortune to contract that common disease in the East, smallpox, and for six weeks I was placed in an isolated building where I saw no one but a doctor, a nurse, and my native servants. The spot where I was segregated was in view of an Indian cemetery, and to keep up one's spirits there were almost daily funerals. One day there must have taken place a rather more important interment than usual, for the band of a native regiment marched at the head of the procession. Whether by chance or otherwise, the programme of music which it discoursed seemed to have been drawn up by someone desirous of perpetrating a musical practical joke. To my astonishment and amusement the band as it passed along in quick time broke into several popular airs, amongst which were "Bonnie Dundee," "The British Grenadiers," and, to crown everything, ended by playing "We'll never come back no more, Boys."



A few days after I was consigned to hospital I was to undergo a less amusing, indeed alarming experience. One night I woke to find myself being jolted about as if someone under the bed was heaving it up and down and pitching it from side to side. For a few moments I did not realise what was happening, but it struck me that for the first time in my life I was experiencing an earthquake. I sprang out of bed and made for the doorway, but after a few seconds, though it seemed longer, the earth tremor ceased, and I passed the rest of the night undisturbed. Next day it became known that there had been a severe earthquake which stretched across much of Northern India and did a good deal of damage, especially at a station where a Gurkha regiment was quartered.

This was not to be my only experience of that nature, for at Tokyo in 1905 earthquakes were not uncommon, and from my room in the Imperial Hotel I have watched the water in a canal nearby rolling about while a tremor lasted. The feeling of utter helplessness and insecurity caused by the sudden upheaval of the solid earth is a strange one and difficult to define, but is not one to which one could easily get accustomed.

The six weeks of isolation passed by and I was given a clean bill of health and discharged from hospital, with no marks of consequence on my headpiece, probably because I had been vaccinated a few days before the malady became pronounced; and no sooner was I back at duty than I resumed the work connected with the assault-at-arms. In this I was much helped by my brother officer, Captain Meiklejohn, who at Elandslaagte in the South African War three years later was to win the Victoria Cross. In that action he lost an arm, the indirect cause of his death some years later, when his horse bolted with him in Hyde Park.

During the assault-at-arms, which lasted for three days, officers from each regiment of the garrison took a share in the proceedings and gave me much assistance; and I was enabled to adopt certain steps which had struck me as advisable from what I had noticed at entertainments of a similar nature. As a rule spectators had had to endure lengthy intervals between the different events, and I determined that at the coming assault there should be no unintentional pause between the conclusion of one event and the beginning of the next—in fact, that a carefully prepared time schedule should be

followed. The result came up to expectations, and the committee were the recipients of many congratulations.

Amongst those present at the assault-at-arms were Sir William Lockhart and his wife, and for him I prepared a brief speech which would be delivered at the close of the proceedings, when Lady Lockhart would present the prizes. By 6.40 P.M. the show was over, while it was still light. Next year, however, when I had become aide-de-camp to the general, I attended the assault-at-arms as a spectator and I had the satisfaction, combined with annoyance, of noting that the full record which I had left for the benefit of my successor had been almost entirely ignored. The assault suffered from long and tedious intervals, and big gaps occurred between several of the events. Indeed, so late was the hour when Lady Lockhart gave away the prizes that I was obliged to send for a lamp from her carriage in order that the names of the winners inscribed on strips of paper attached to them could be deciphered; and though the general curtailed his remarks we did not leave the ground till nearly eight o'clock, when it was dark. As we drove off, Sir William remarked that this year's show had been very different from that of the previous year. I was not, however, surprised, for my successor as secretary—though a smart, gallant officer—was a notorious squire of dames, and during the afternoon he had passed his time in the enclosure with the ladies of his choice instead of devoting every moment to ensuring that the task he had undertaken was a success.

To go back a little, I must mention that two days after the assault of which I was secretary there was a sequel which I had little anticipated. I was dining with the Lockharts and as I was departing the general said that he wished to have a few words with me. He was not, he said, satisfied with his aide-de-camp, and though he knew that, as I was a Staff College officer, I must wish to get an appointment on the General Staff, he would be glad if I would replace the officer in question. He went on to say that there was almost certain to be an explosion on the frontier within a couple of years and that he would be in command of any operations that resulted. This would provide an opportunity for me to serve on the staff in the field, and he would take care that I was given an appointment. And here I may say that his

prophecy was to come true, for in 1897 I was to serve as D.A.A.G. in the Tirah expedition. I replied to the general's offer that I should be proud to serve on his personal staff, and, though I was about to start on leave home and had booked my passage, I decided to cancel it.

A little later the Lockharts went to Kashmir for a month and when they returned I joined them at Murree and lived with them at "The Terrace," which was the residence of the General Officer Commanding the Punjab Army. I cannot say that I ever took kindly to the duties of aide-de-camp, though I carried them out to the best of my ability. There was too much of the glorified flunkey business about them and suppression of personality to make them agreeable, but to balance these objections I realised that it was well worth while paying some sacrifice to be associated with a man such as was Sir William Lockhart, for whom I felt both admiration and affection.

Each year when the hot weather was at an end he made tours of inspection, when I saw more of him and his principal staff officer, General Nicholson, who accompanied him; and from both these officers I gained much knowledge, for they possessed an intimate acquaintance with India. The latter, under whom some years later I was to serve at the War Office when he was Director of Military Intelligence, rose to be Chief of the Imperial General Staff, became a field-marshal, and was raised to the peerage.

During one of our winter tours we went to Parachinar at the head of the Kurram Pass, which was the headquarters of my friend, Roos-Keppel, who commanded the militia there; and one day we visited the Peiwar Kotal, where Sir Frederic Roberts had defeated the Afghans in 1878.

In September we went from Murree to pay a visit to the Commander-in-Chief at Simla after making inspections *en route* at several hill-stations in the Punjab Command. While at Snowdon, where the Chief lived, there seemed to be a mania among the personal staff for taking exercise, and, not wishing to be outdone in that respect, I used daily at an early hour and before my duties began to make some pedestrian excursion. One morning I had arrived nearly at the top of Jakko—a hill which rises at an extremity of Simla and dominates it and the slopes on which it is built. Hearing a noise above

me I looked up the hillside and saw a large bird fly away from a tree on which it had apparently alighted. A moment after there appeared a swarm of what I at first thought were bees making towards me, but which proved to be hornets. It seemed that, having been disturbed, they meant to wreak vengeance on the harmless pedestrian. I turned back and took to my heels, running down the steep path as fast as I could, but not before some of them had caught me up and, despite frantic waving of my handkerchief, stung me on the back of the head and forehead. The pursuit fortunately did not last long and a hundred feet or so lower down ceased, when I continued the descent to Snowdon at a more leisurely pace, having had enough of Jakko for that day. The attack had no worse result than a bad headache, which wore off during the afternoon.

After leaving Simla we made a tour to Attock Fort and the bridge over the Indus, and I pictured my friend, Keef of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, marshalling his polyglot detachment for inspection by the visiting general.

About this time a rumour was afloat that a further advance up the Nile in the direction of Khartum would take place in April. General John Gordon, who was then military secretary at the India Office, a brother-in-law of Gordon of my regiment, whom I have earlier mentioned, and an old friend of Sir William Lockhart, had sometime before written and suggested that on my way home in spring with my general I should look in at Cairo and have an interview with the Sirdar. Thereupon I asked Sir William to write to Sir Herbert Kitchener (as he then was) and say that I should probably be in Egypt at the end of March and that I was anxious to see active service under him.

On the 16th of that month we left for Bombay and sailed on the P. and O. *Australia* of 6900 tons. I shared a cabin with a man, H. M. Stewart, with whom I became great friends before the voyage was over, and about a year later I was horrified to hear that he had lost his life in terrible circumstances on the railway on which he held some appointment. It appeared that one day in the course of his duties he was making his way along the line and, hearing a train coming up behind him, stepped to one side. He must have caught the heel of his boot where there was a guard rail, and before

he could get clear or the train be brought to a standstill he was knocked down and killed.

As, when we left Bombay, there were some cases of plague there, I was not permitted to land at Suez and had first to sail across to Moses' Wells, where my baggage was very perfunctorily fumigated. I passed the night at Suez and then proceeded to Cairo, where I found that the Sirdar had just returned from a tour of inspection and would receive me on the following day. On proceeding next morning to military headquarters I met Watson, the aide-de-camp, and Slatin Pasha, the story of whose dramatic escape from Khartum after his long imprisonment there was familiar to me through having read Wingate's 'Fire and Sword in the Sudan.' Watson caused me some disappointment when he told me that so far as he knew there was no intention of sending a force up the Nile that summer, and Slatin did not improve matters, but threw more cold water on my hopes by saying that unless I knew Arabic I could be of little use—a remark with which I could not help inwardly concurring.

I was now ushered into the presence of the great man himself, a stern-looking personage with a squint, who looked me up and down with an inscrutable face. He opened the conversation by saying that he had been inquiring whether there was a vacancy in the Egyptian Army for a British officer, but that, I intimated, I did not desire. Next he went on to inform me that as regards special service officers he could not take them unless an expedition was about to be prepared, and that there were officers with prior claims who must first be considered. After some ten minutes' talk it became clear that "nothing was doing," so I took my departure. Later I had lunch with the Sirdar, but the situation, so far as my hopes of employment in Egypt were concerned, remained unchanged. The same day I saw the adjutant-general, General Rundle, who then and always was most agreeable.

It was the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, and I saw the procession through London on the 22nd June, and the Naval and Aldershot reviews. I soon got tired of doing nothing particular in the capital and decided to carry out an intention which I had formed a number of years earlier when I was attached to the King's Own Regiment during a course at the Signalling School. One of the majors of that

regiment, Woodgate, who was killed at the action of Spion Kop during the operations for the relief of Ladysmith, had given me the idea. This was to visit the ground of the Waterloo campaign on the same dates of June as those on which it had been fought. By so doing one would be able to see the country in its summer garb as it was in Wellington's time. I also wanted to ascertain how it came about that the French cavalry, charging through the cornfields at Quatre Bras, had been able to surprise and ride down some of our infantry.

When I arrived on the site of that battlefield, eighty-two years after the date on which it had been fought, I was fortunate to find that the field alongside the road from Quatre Bras to Ligny was planted with rye, which had attained to a height sufficient to conceal the approach of a man on horseback. The only other crop which I was to see in a later year in Manchuria that exceeded the height of the Belgian rye was the millet or *kao-liang*.

I must not forget to mention that yet another reason that induced me to go to Belgium was that I was anxious to traverse on foot the ground which, had Marshal Grouchy chosen to march to the sound of the guns at Waterloo instead of obstinately following the route to Wavre, might have brought him there in time to intervene in the battle.

I abstain from relating the details of this tour in the Low Countries, which I feel is now rather out of date, but it left me satisfied that a force of the strength of that commanded by the French marshal could not have arrived, even if unopposed, in time to have saved the situation, as Napoleon would have had the world believe.

Sometime after I got home from this tour my sister Alice and I went to Ireland and paid a visit to Colonel and Mrs Rowan-Hamilton at Killelegh Castle in County Down. Lady Dufferin was a sister of the colonel, and we spent a day at Clandeboye, where I had once before been when quartered at Belfast. Lord Dufferin was at home and we were fortunate to meet that charming diplomat of world-wide distinction.

That year the Lord Mayor of London gave a dinner to the Army and another to the Navy, probably on account of its being the year of the Queen's Jubilee. I was one of the guests at the former banquet, and others present were Lord Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief, the Secretary of State for

War, and many general officers. During the evening I was introduced to two old soldiers—one the Crimean veteran, Major-General Luke O'Connor, who, when a sergeant in the 23rd Royal Welch Fusiliers, had won the Victoria Cross at the battle of the Alma, where he saved the colours of his regiment. The other distinguished soldier was General Olpherts, who was known by the sobriquet of "Hellfire Jack." He, too, had gained the Cross for gallantry in the Mutiny, and of him it was said that he never went into action without meriting that decoration for valour.

A little later in the summer I travelled with my friend, Frederic Gordon, to Milan and thence to the Hotel Roseg at Pontresina. Either with him or my greater friend, Arthur Norman, also a brother officer, I used generally to spend a portion of my leave on the continent each year, but on this occasion my stay abroad was to be brief.

It may be remembered that when Sir William Lockhart took me as aide-de-camp he mentioned that should there be an outbreak of the frontier tribes he would certainly be in chief command of the expedition that would be sent to restore order. While Gordon and I were on our way home from Switzerland, on reaching Basle we read in a newspaper that the Afridis had risen and seized forts in the Khyber Pass. I therefore decided to leave my friend and make my way without loss of time to Nauheim, where the Lockharts were staying. This I did, and after two days there, when it had become known that Sir William had been appointed to command the Expeditionary Force, I hastened to London. There arrangements had to be made regarding our passages to the East. These effected, I went to Aldershot to bid good-bye to my regiment, which was stationed there, and thence to Wiltshire, where my mother and some of my sisters were spending the summer. The news which I brought gave her a shock, for the prospect of active service was unexpected; but, as usual, she bore it bravely, feeling, I am sure, that I might reap advantage from what was to come; and after farewells I returned to town and at night left for Brindisi.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE TIRAH CAMPAIGN.

MY two earlier campaigns, if indeed they deserved that name, had brought me the same number of Indian General Service medals and clasps. Though I was proud to possess this evidence of having served in the field, I was conscious that they had been cheaply earned, for in both cases I had had the ill-luck to arrive at the scene of operations after such fighting as there had been had come to an end. Nevertheless, during them I had gained much knowledge and experience which in the years to come might prove of value. I was therefore in high spirits at the prospect of a third campaign, which promised to be far more important than either of its predecessors.

In that state of mind I boarded the mail train at Victoria Station on the evening of the 3rd September 1897 and found on it Colonel Reginald Hart, V.C., another colonel who had the same decoration, Colonel Ian Hamilton of my regiment, and Major-General Lord Methuen—all of whom were bound for the East. Hart, with whom I shared a cabin on the P. and O. S.S. *China*, was well known to me by name and reputation and was, I think, one of the coolest officers under fire I have ever met. He had won the Victoria Cross during the Afghan War and possessed also several decorations, French and British, for saving life at sea. He had not, however, a sense of humour, and he seemed to take everything more seriously than perhaps was actually the case. I remember one day at lunch during the voyage he was holding forth on some military subject. What it was I have forgotten, but it may have been of a classical nature, for he and I both knew well Plutarch's 'Lives.' Anyhow, he had reached a point when he had become rather emotional, and in his excitement accidentally called Colonel Hamilton "Hannibal." This slip of the tongue was followed by a burst of laughter from those



at the table, and it took a few moments to restore order, when the gallant colonel proceeded with his story. I noticed the blank look on his face, which was explained later when he asked me at what everyone had laughed.

I found that Lord Methuen was on his way to pay a visit to the Commander-in-Chief, and though there was some difference in years between us we were friends from that time until he died, long after. During the voyage I suggested that he might care to take part in the coming expedition, and as he expressed himself as keen to do so I was able to have it arranged that he should become press censor. As such at least one of the amateur correspondents who accompanied the force had to be grateful to him for assistance in composing his daily news telegram.

Before we reached Brindisi we were joined at Piacenza by Sir William Lockhart from Nauheim, when he told me that he wished me to be made D.A.A.G.—on a par with G.S.O. 2 at the present day—at the headquarters of the force he was to command.

On arrival at Port Said he found a cable which gave in some detail the names of his staff and subordinate commanders. Of these the appointment of principal interest to the general was that of General Nicholson, who had been nominated to command a brigade, while Colonel Hamilton had been appointed to be Chief of the Staff. This arrangement was not at all to the liking of Sir William, for Nicholson had been his principal staff officer for some time in peace days at Murree and knew his ways. On the other hand, Hamilton was distinctly a fighting general and far better suited in the circumstances to command an infantry brigade. This led to my being sent to the telegraph office, whence a cablegram was despatched to Simla asking that a change should be made. At the same time I was told to state that the general wished that I should be given the appointment on the headquarter's staff which I have earlier mentioned, and on reaching Aden it was found that the Chief had met in full my general's wishes. Although I was to be on the staff of the general it was promised, at my request, that should my regiment take part in the operations and be likely to be seriously engaged, I was to be allowed temporarily to rejoin it to command my company.

From Bombay we proceeded to Umballa, where I left the

general and went to Rawul Pindi, he and Lord Methuen going to Simla for a few days. During the rail journey I noticed that the latter travelled with only two books, one of which was the Bible and the other Plutarch's 'Lives,' and I felt that as regards reading matter no better selection could have been made.

At this stage of my story, in order to make clearer what follows, I must touch upon the reasons for the expedition in which I was on the eve of taking part, the general object of which was to exact reparations from the Afridis and Orakzais for their unprovoked aggression on the Peshawar-Kohat border and their attacks on our frontier posts.

These two powerful confederations were not the only ones involved in the conflagration of 1897-98, for others, their fanaticism stirred by their mullahs, had gone on the war-path. The exact causes of the several outbreaks, which exceeded anything that had occurred since the Mutiny, are not easy to trace, but it has been asserted, probably with good reason, that the Durand Boundary Commission of 1893, which was agreed upon between the Amir of Afghanistan on the one hand and the Government of India on the other, was responsible. By this treaty a line between the two countries was settled upon, and, when demarcated, it was hoped that thereafter there would no longer remain any doubt as to the responsibility of the power concerned "to intervene, restrain, and prevent disturbances of the peace."

Both the Amir and the turbulent tribes, however, preferred the already existing régime, and when the former gave his assent to the treaty he must have done so with a good deal of mental reserve, doubtless foreseeing what would arise once actual demarcation was attempted. Of this we had had a foretaste in South Waziristan in 1894, when the task which was begun there led to the night attack on the camp at Wana, where it may be remembered I joined as orderly officer Sir William Lockhart, who was in command of the troops, shortly after it took place.

So far the Afridis had kept the peace, and there was good reason to believe that from motives of self-interest they would continue to do so; but the virus which infected the frontier so widely in 1897 led them to assert themselves and make preposterous demands which, being refused, and urged

on by their mullahs, caused them to break faith, and in the end the matter could only be settled by an appeal to arms.

Meantime the general had arrived at Rawul Pindi, and a few days later I found myself once more at Kohat, which was the starting place for the advance into the enemy's country. On the way there I narrowly escaped having a smash, as the ponies of the *tonga* in which I was took fright and, swerving off the road, upset the vehicle, pitching its occupants on to the ground. Fortunately, we escaped with only a few bruises, for I was in no mood to become a casualty at the outset of the campaign.

On reaching Kohat I took up my duties as D.A.A.G. at the headquarters of the force, and I found it no easy matter to disembarass myself of the work of aide-de-camp. There were two of them and as many orderly officers, all of whom had not arrived, and when they did so, some of them fell short of the standard I expected, which made me feel that those with whom they had been serving had been easily satisfied. Indeed, until Frank Maxwell, the general's nephew, shortly joined and taught them their duties, there was much of which to complain. For a fortnight I was obliged to combine my work on the staff with that of aide-de-camp by spending half the day at one job and the remainder at the other.

Maxwell, whom I had not before met, was a very gallant officer. He had already distinguished himself when attached to the Guides at the outset of the Chitral campaign, and was to serve under me in the Great War on the Arras front.

After remaining a few days at Kohat we moved to the top of the Samana Range, the scene of earlier exploits, in which Sir William had been in command of the troops; and it was at a point on it that the attack on Dargai took place.

At this stage of the operations the 2nd Division, under Major-General Yeatman-Biggs, was employed in improving the track over the Chagru Kotal—the summit of the pass through the Samana Range, between Shinwari and the Khanki Valley. Before that work had made much progress hostile tribesmen had gathered and were impeding it, so much so that an operation had to be undertaken to drive them off and secure free passage for our troops. With this object two columns were employed, which resulted in the seizure of Dargai, a hamlet on the summit of the cliff which overlooked

the *kotal*. Had that place been held and not relinquished once it was in our hands the action which followed two days later might not have been necessary. But the tribesmen quickly perceived the advantage of regaining possession of so dominating a point, and after doing so were driven off in an action in which the Gordon Highlanders added to their laurels.

I had not forgotten Sir William's promise that I should be allowed temporarily to rejoin my regiment in certain circumstances, and on the day that Dargai was recovered I had ridden with Lord Methuen and Maxwell from our camp along the rocky ridge to a point where we looked down on the *kotal*, many hundred feet below. The 2nd Division was threading its way up the steep track to the *kotal*, and instead of bypassing Dargai, which I think was possible, and so turning the position of the tribesmen, had launched an attack by a Gurkha regiment, which was followed by British troops and was having no success. As the attack developed the Gordon Highlanders became involved, but before matters had reached that stage, after consulting Lord Methuen, I had ridden back to camp. From where we were it had not been possible to identify the various units far below, and to reach them would involve climbing down the steep and rugged mountain-side, which would have taken time. He considered that the suggestions of a junior officer would not be acceptable and would carry no weight, and that as the action seemed to be at a standstill it would be better for me to ride back to the fountain-head as quickly as the rough ground permitted and explain matters.

Maxwell and I therefore set off and made the best of our way over the miles of rocky ground between the point overlooking the *kotal* and our camp. It was getting towards evening and as we arrived a heliograph message was received to the effect that the Gordon Highlanders had cut the Gordian knot and taken what was an almost impregnable position.

The possession of Dargai opened the way to Karappa in the Khanki Valley where, forty-eight hours after, the two divisions that formed the Expeditionary Force were assembled. It did not take long to discover that the troops under Sir William Lockhart were a much less efficient body than those which he had commanded in Waziristan and had led up the Tochi in 1894. It was then composed mostly of units of the

Punjab Frontier Force, all of whom had much experience of mountain warfare, while in the present campaign such was far from being the case. The greater part of the Tirah Expeditionary Force had not enjoyed that advantage and did not realise what it meant to be confronted by an active and agile enemy who knew every inch of his country and would be ready to seize every opportunity for turning the tables on his civilised foe. From the first day of our advance this was brought home to me when the senior major of a British battalion instead, as ordered, of holding an important point which guarded our line of communication, quitted it and withdrew to camp on the pretext that night was approaching. A little earlier on the same day it was noticed that one of the divisions had omitted the ordinary precaution of ensuring its safety by fortifying the perimeter of its camp and had placed at the most exposed part a mountain battery and, worse still, a postal unit which possessed no means of defence of any kind.

By 1897, too, it had not been recognised that the long range of the latest pattern of rifle, some of which the Afridis had captured, made it necessary that the outposts should be thrown much farther forward than in the days when the *jezail* or local pattern of musket was almost the only one which was likely to be met. In consequence, until precautions had been taken, we suffered appreciable loss through firing into camp after dark. One evening while at dinner these disagreeable attentions began, and during the meal the crack of bullets overhead was continual. One officer was killed and another severely wounded at a table alongside our own, several others had narrow escapes, and there were casualties among the troops and transport animals. Before the next evening certain high ground at a distance from which the camp was overlooked and from which the fire had come was occupied by several companies, and our tormentors became less sedulous in the sport of blazing into the blue.

It took time for some of the troops to adjust themselves to their surroundings, and on the morning of the attack on the main pass, when I was afoot betimes to ensure that the operation should start at the correct hour, I was horrified when all secrecy was thrown to the winds by the blare of a bugle sounding the *réveillé*. It was then too late to do anything to remedy matters, and one could only hope that our



Myself, Aide-de-camp to Commander-in-Chief India, 1899.

[To face p. 108.]



wily enemy, in whose ranks were many who had served with Indian corps, would suppose that the routine of peace-time was being followed and that there was no intention of shifting camp that day.

When planning the course of operations it had been hoped that the Afridis would make a stand at their border and not allow us to enter their country without a stiff fight. Had that been the case the campaign might have been brought to a close far more speedily than if they fell back before us with only a minimum of fighting. But the tribesmen showed no disposition to play our game; Fabian tactics were to be adopted, and many weary weeks would pass before a settlement—and that by no means satisfactory—was reached.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE TIRAH CAMPAIGN (*continued*).

As soon as it was evident that the Afridis had no intention of submitting, it became necessary to adopt measures to induce them to do so. Every corner of their country was visited by columns of varying strength, which Sir William generally accompanied—a procedure which showed that no matter where they retired we would follow them and “lift the purdah.” Conscious that they were not a match for us in a stand-up fight, they hung on the flanks of the columns like bees stinging whenever they got a favourable chance of doing so. Their marksmanship, knowledge of ground, and rapidity of movement over its difficulties when compared to regular troops burdened with equipment, baggage and supplies, gave them an advantage, and at times our casualties reached figures which in those days were regarded as heavy.

As the larger the force the less possible or desirable is it to describe operations in detail, I shall confine myself to the more outstanding portions only of the campaign or those in which I was more particularly concerned.

After only a few days at Maidan, our first camp in the Afridi country, it was decided to move to Bagh, a few miles distant, at both of which places we suffered a good deal from sniping after dark. With three other officers I was ordered to go to the proposed site, and as a wood-collecting party would be near that place, an escort was not thought necessary. We had finished prospecting when we suddenly came under fire at some two to three hundred yards, and had to make for the nearest habitations, behind which we took cover for ourselves and our ponies. The bullets came fast and thick, and though unpleasantly near, fortunately missed us, and of the wood-collecting party there were no signs. The only way to escape our predicament, being armed with nothing but revolvers, seemed to be to gallop for it and take the chance

of being bowled over. While the matter was under consideration I noticed a party of Gurkhas who evidently had been sent in our direction as a covering force for the foragers. At its head was a subahdar, whose attention I drew by waving my pocket handkerchief, on which he grasped what was happening, extended his men, and opened the way of escape.

A few days later the force moved to Bagh, and one of the columns which I have mentioned made an expedition into the Bara Valley through the Dwa Toi (two river) Gorge. The object of this was to gain particulars of that route before committing to it a much larger force; and on this occasion the column was lightly equipped, since it would be only absent from the main camp for three or four days.

The distance that had to be traversed was not great, but the difficulties of the track, which crossed many times an icy-cold river, were bad enough for individuals, let alone an armed force with impedimenta. At the narrowest part of the gorge, a few miles from Bagh, tribesmen high up on its precipitous sides caused the leading battalion some casualties and delayed the column. As I was accompanying the advanced-guard I took my Mauser pistol and tried what a ten-round clip of ammunition would do, as its range was several hundred yards. To my surprise the burst of fire from it must have impressed the snipers, for they at once ceased their attentions, cleared off, and interfered no more with the advance.

We did not reach our bivouac till late in the afternoon and had to spend the night without baggage, owing to the difficulty in getting the transport animals through the gorge, and on arrival there realised that we should be without food. It was arranged that Sir William should dine with an infantry battalion, which had shown more prevision than had headquarters, and, unlike the foolish virgins of the parable, was provided with what was necessary. The unit which came to his rescue handed to me a bottle of whisky and four chickens captured during the march, which our escort cooked in a *chatty*, and which with the *chupatties* served to satisfy our appetites. For the general I rigged up an apology for a bed by the help of straw, my greatcoat, and a pillow made from my haversack covered with a large silk handkerchief, and he passed quite a comfortable night, in spite of an attack of fever and ague. As for General Nicholson and me, we buried

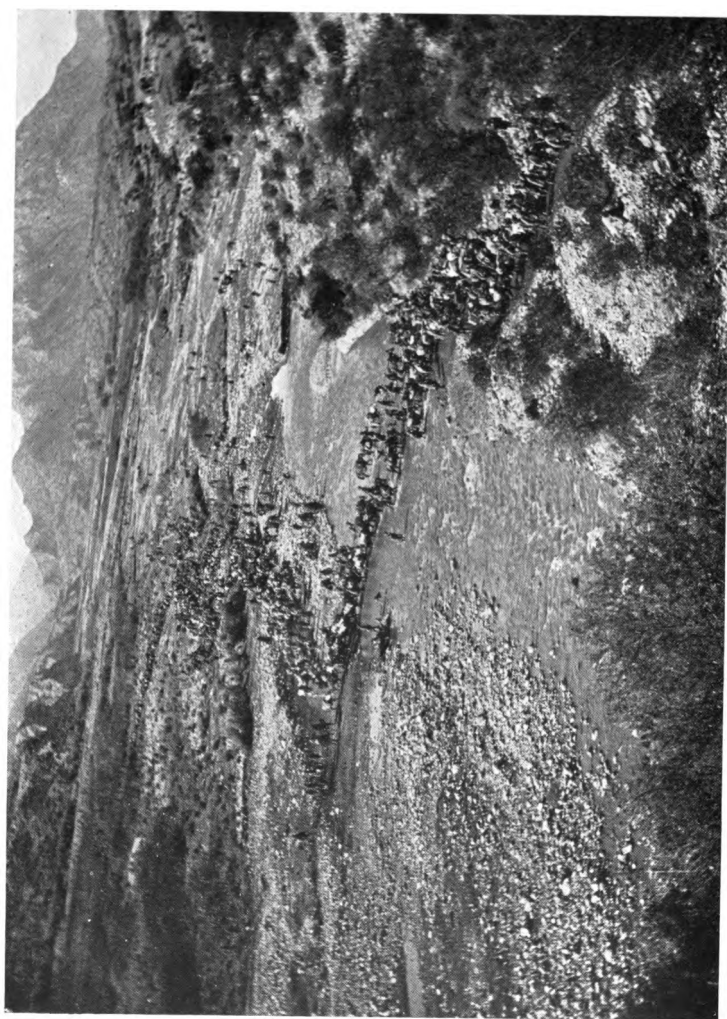
ourselves in the long stalks of Indian corn which were lying about and, though they provided little warmth, we survived the coldest night it has ever been my fate to spend in the open. Had it been possible to stretch one's limbs by the camp-fire, discomfort would have been less, but it had to be extinguished at nightfall as the Afridis on the hillsides used it as a target until the embers had been thoroughly stamped out.

The next night was even colder, but by then our baggage had arrived, which made it bearable, and precautions had been taken which diminished the activities of the snipers.

Having gained all necessary information for the next visit to this part of the country, the march back to Bagh began. As usual, when carrying out a retrograde movement, the rear-guard was followed by a pack of savage tribesmen who, like ravenous wolves, hung on our flanks and swarmed down the steep sides of the gorge to within a few yards of the 36th Sikhs. But the gallant commander of that fine regiment, Colonel Haughton, greatly owing to his personal exertions, succeeded in keeping them at bay and caused them loss, so that the main body was able to pursue its way almost unscathed.

The expedition through the Dwa Toi Gorge was soon followed by another which, through an even more difficult region, this time over mountains and not along the bed of a river, brought us to the Chamkani country, not far from the top of the Kurram Pass at Parachinar, which I had earlier visited with Sir William Lockhart. The troops employed on this occasion had been given orders to destroy by burning or otherwise every fortified post and the towers, which are so numerous in many parts of the North-West Frontier. During part of this expedition I was attached as staff officer to a force which joined us from Parachinar, at the head of which was an officer who led his column and that from Bagh. In the operation which followed I found myself with Roos-Keppel in the cup-shaped valley which was the stronghold of the tribe with which we had been ordered to deal. The sappers were engaged in smashing with dynamite the many large millstones to be found in the dwellings, and, while watching them, I spoke to a good-looking young Indian cavalry officer, who turned out to be Lieutenant Richmond Battye—a member of a family of soldiers, of which it might be said that there is a tradition that most of them die in action. After a few





Tirah Expeditionary Force leaving the Bara Valley.

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words with him I passed on, but had barely left his side when he fell dead, shot through the head. The Chamkannis, seeing that we had completed our work of destruction and were about to withdraw, had plucked up courage—for they are a cowardly crew—and had begun a fairly heavy fire on whomsoever was within view in the valley, to the high ground overlooking which their families had betaken themselves.

On completion of the work of this force we returned by another route to Bagh, where arrangements were made for quitting the country in two columns, the line of communication over the Sampagha Pass through which we had entered the territory of the Afridis being closed down. One of these columns which Sir William would accompany would retire down the already prospected Bara Valley, and the other by the Mastura route.

It was now the month of December and the weather had become very cold, for the North-West Frontier in winter is unlike the plains of India. Snow kept falling at intervals, and as baggage had been much reduced, tents were not carried. In consequence there was some discomfort, especially among the transport drivers and coolies, who were not too warmly clad. But the heads of all were turned towards civilisation and away from the inhospitable mountains, and the brief spell of hardship could be more readily endured.

There were faults in the conduct of this march down the Bara Valley which were attributable to bad staff work on the part of the division with which we were, but I will not touch on them. It will suffice to say that, after a trying experience lasting several days, during which the rear-guard, through indifferent handling, got into difficulties and the main body did not escape being harassed by snipers on the steep hillsides, we arrived at Mamanai, not far from Peshawar, whither Sir William and his staff proceeded, while the troops were given several days' rest before undertaking the next item on the programme. While we were withdrawing from Tirah the attention of the Afridis had been concentrated on the Bara column, to the exclusion of the division that retired along the Mastura route and it had been practically ignored.

Shortly before we reached Mamanai a sergeant of a British regiment had been shot and had fallen into the Afridis'

hands, but was fortunate enough to escape torture and mutilation. At all costs he had to be rescued, and through the efforts of Colonel Warburton, the political officer in charge of the Khyber Pass, this was effected. The man was brought by his captors to our camp and handed over to the doctors, who were advised by those who had held him prisoner not to remove the apology for a bandage which was wound round his body. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that their advice was ignored, when it was found that beneath it was the body of a dead chicken. This had been cut into two portions, which had been applied to the entry and exit of the bullet and then bound tight. The man died soon after the wound had been treated in the orthodox manner, and no more was thought of the matter.

Many years passed, when one day after the Great War I chanced to be reading a work entitled, 'The Insect Legion,' I came across a passage which reminded me of the treatment adopted by the wild tribesmen, and I wondered whether they might not have been correct in their contention that if the wound were left sandwiched with the freshly killed chicken the man would recover, while our own highly trained surgeons were mistaken in acting as they did. I refrain from offering an opinion on the matter. The subject is interesting, though unsavoury, and I quote the passage in the book to which I have referred. It is as follows: "During the Great War [1914-18] medical officers became accustomed to finding wounded men lying on the ground with maggots in their festering wounds. To the surprise of the doctors these men did not develop the expected infection trouble with which they were constantly battling. Investigation, however, showed that the maggots were feeding on the dead tissue and thus depriving the bacteria of their food." The subject is, as I say, an unsavoury one, so far at any rate as the non-professional being is concerned, but it does seem possible that the semi-civilised frontiersmen may have known more about dealing with wounds than was supposed.

At Peshawar Sir William Lockhart betook himself to the residence of the general commanding the district, while General Nicholson and I lived in the dāk bungalow near the railway station, where we began making arrangements for the next and final operation of the Expeditionary Force. Two

days before Christmas 1897 I was sent to the bungalow of the civil commissioner, where General Sir Henry Havelock-Allan, V.C., M.P., was staying, to arrange about his accompanying the force during that operation. As colonel of the Royal Irish Regiment he had come to India, so much associated with the name of Havelock, in order to clear up some misunderstanding concerning that distinguished regiment which had arisen before Sir William Lockhart had arrived at Kohat at the outset of the campaign, while it was employed under General Yeatman-Biggs on the Samana Range.

Sir Henry, whom I was interested to meet, was a smart-looking, elderly soldier, who had won the Victoria Cross many years earlier during the Mutiny. Almost his first words were that he was insured for a substantial sum, but that the policy did not cover war risks. As he naturally did not wish to forfeit his money I explained that if, during the march into and out of the Afridi territory, he remained with my general, he would be on the same footing as he, so far as risks were concerned.

All arrangements having been concluded for the next dive over the frontier, we left Peshawar on the day before Christmas and camped close to the entrance of the Khyber Pass, where a brigade under General Hammond was already assembled with the object of reopening the route into Afghanistan. Next day both forces moved off in different directions, our route taking us into the Zakka Khel country, one of the Afridi tribes which was mainly responsible for the rising and the capture of the posts between our border and the territory of the Amir. That day there was no opposition, and on the following day's march we were left severely alone; but we were then entering and not leaving the country. As it was desirable to carry out the programme, while avoiding a clash, I suggested that we should, instead of camping early, continue the advance to China, the principal Zakka Khel village, and during the afternoon prepare it for destruction. I had noticed that frontier tribesmen were not early risers in cold weather, and I foresaw that by a matutinal move from the valley, up which we had marched, we might escape the customary rear-guard trouble on our return journey. The idea was approved, and the Afridis on this occasion enjoyed the experience of "missing the bus," for we reached the vicinity of Ali Musjid,



near the entrance to the Khyber Pass, with almost negligible casualties.

At this place Sir Henry was to leave us and proceed under escort to Landi Kotal, where General Hammond's brigade had arrived. Before bidding him good-bye, Sir William Lockhart's last words, which I heard, were a strong injunction in no circumstances to leave the escort, for the route through the pass, though nominally open, was not safe for travellers, except on what were called caravan days, when a convoy passed through it.

Two days later we went from Peshawar to Rawul Pindi, and on the last day of 1897 a telegram arrived to say that on the return march from Landi Kotal Sir Henry had ridden down the Khyber Gorge, which diverges from the road near Ali Musjid to Fort Jamrud, and had been killed. The escort with which he rode was in command of a native officer, whose recommendation to remain with it had unwisely been ignored.

When details arrived it seemed that the general may have had the idea of rejoining the escort farther on, but this would have involved riding for several miles through dangerous country. Why he disregarded my general's injunctions will never be known. It seems that some tribesmen of the Zakka Khel, on the lookout for loot, must have watched the rider as he pursued his way alone through the defile, for his body was found stripped, but not mutilated, not far from where we had camped on the same evening as we had left Peshawar on our outward march. His horse, with a wound in his jaw, was recovered, and through the agency of Colonel Warburton his watch was returned and sent to his family.

The funeral of this distinguished soldier, which I attended, took place at Rawul Pindi on New Year's Day 1898, and a cavalry regiment, a battery of artillery, and four battalions of infantry formed the escort.

About this time there appeared to be a possibility of the resumption of the advance to Khartum, and as I was as keen as ever to see service in the Sudan I telegraphed to General Rundle and my old brother officer, General Hector Macdonald, and asked them to assist me in my aspirations. The advance up the Nile would probably begin in July, and there would be time for me to take part in it as a special service officer and be back in London ready to return to India in the autumn



Where Sir Henry Havelock-Allan, V.C., was shot.

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requisite staff and because he was not fully acquainted with the situation.

Buller had earlier realised his limitations as a commander, which were apparent at the Autumn Manœuvres prior to the operations for the relief of Khartum. On his way to South Africa in 1899, when he reached St Helena he sent a cable to the Secretary of State for War begging that he might be relieved from his command, which he realised was beyond his compass. It was, however, considered at home that it was too late to make a change, and he was directed to continue in his command. Later he acquired some confidence, but the operations for the relief of Ladysmith were not a pattern to be followed in future campaigns.

I have wandered somewhat from my theme, but after a few days at Calcutta we returned to Peshawar. There we had a long and tedious wait while the eight hundred rifles, or money in lieu thereof, were being collected and handed in as payment of the fine fixed as due from the rebellious, and still only half-beaten, tribesmen.

At Peshawar General Nicholson occupied for a time the dāk bungalow, and on the 5th March an orderly announced that a sahib wished to see him. On going to the door I was confronted by a young man, on the shoulders of whose uniform were the steel chains of a cavalry officer, and I at once guessed that he was Winston Churchill, whom I had not before met. I inquired what he wished, and he replied that he would like to have a word with General Nicholson, who, when I referred the matter to him, told me to ascertain what was wanted. Churchill explained that he had been given a few days' leave from his regiment, the 4th Hussars, and that he was anxious to be employed with the Tirah Field Force in some capacity. I was rather interested at the idea of having him with us, and after a moment's talk with the general I took the newcomer across the road to Sir William Lockhart's office, where he was writing, and said that Churchill was outside and was anxious to serve with the force. I then mentioned that one of his orderly officers, Molyneux of the Blues, was obliged to return home, his leave being near an end, and inquired if he would care to take Churchill in his place. The general looked up from his writing, and all he said was, "All right; take him if you like." Thereupon I rejoined Churchill and,

informing him of the decision, telegraphed to the adjutant-general for the appointment to be approved. The matter was shortly arranged, and the future Prime Minister joined the staff, to which he proved to be an interesting addition.

I cannot recall exactly how long he remained with us at a time when the activities of the Tirah Field Force had practically come to an end. The period, however, was quite long enough to allow one to form an opinion of the young cavalry officer who was widely regarded in the Army as superprecocious, indeed by some as insufferably bumptious, and realise that neither of these epithets was applicable to him. On the contrary, my distinct recollection of him at this time was that he was modest and paid attention to what was said, not attempting to monopolise the conversation or thrust his opinions—and clear-cut opinions they were on many subjects—on his listeners. He enjoyed giving vent to his views on matters military and other, but there was nothing that could be called aggressive or self-assertive which could have aroused antagonism among the most sensitive of those with whom he was talking. He struck me at almost first sight as cut out on a vastly different pattern from any officer of his years I had so far met; and though I cannot pretend that I foresaw the height of fame to which he would one day rise, still less that it would fall to him later on to be the saviour of his country, I might almost say the civilised world, I had a feeling that such a prodigy would go far and was not “born to blush unseen and waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

We were in each other's company during a good part of each day, as the work at this time was not heavy, and I was able to go about with him whenever the spirit moved me. Many a mile did we cover on foot and otherwise, while I listened to the story of his experiences in Cuba two years earlier, when he was attached to the Spanish Forces, and in return told him a few of my own.

Amongst other things I gathered that he had no intention of making the Army his profession, but proposed to follow in the footsteps of his father, for whom he seemed to have much admiration, mingled with awe rather than affection. He was fond of quoting from his speeches in the House of Commons, and one of them which seemed specially to appeal to him—for before all things he was profoundly patriotic—

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A LOST OPPORTUNITY.

WE arrived home on the 25th April, being welcomed at Victoria Station by my mother and my unmarried sisters; and no sooner was I back in London than I resumed my efforts towards seeing service in the Sudan.

It will be remembered that I had visited Cairo and seen the Sirdar on my way home a year earlier, and while there had paved the way for returning when operations up the Nile were resumed. Since then I had served in a toughish campaign for which I had been given the D.S.O., and my general in his despatch had stated that I had proved myself to be "a staff officer of high promise, of great ability, and of untiring mental and physical energy." I felt, therefore, hopeful that I might be acceptable and be accepted as a special service officer in Egypt. Sir William Lockhart would be returning to India as Commander-in-Chief before the end of the year, and there was good reason to believe that the operations for the relief of Khartum would be finished before then. I am sorry, however, to have to say that I was doomed to suffer disappointment, for when the time came for implementing his undertaking the general failed to do so. I was still aide-de-camp, which made it difficult and undesirable for me to pull strings on my own account, so one day, happening to meet General Hector Macdonald, who was making a brief stay in London and who knew the general, I arranged to take him to tea with the Lockharts at their hotel, where he undertook to put in a word on my account. This he did in unmistakable terms, and as Sir William, always keen to see active service himself, continued to show interest in my desire to go to Egypt, he told me to come with him next day to the War Office, when he would arrange what was wanted with the military secretary. However, he took no steps to further my wishes, and when I addressed him on the subject he put

me off. The same day, being rather puzzled with what had occurred, I saw Lady Lockhart, and when I spoke about Egypt she replied that *they* had decided that it would be best for me not to go there. Her influence with him was powerful, so much so that the general went back on his promise to help.

Lady Lockhart, like many of her sex, dearly loved a bargain, and through a business friend I had been able to get her, at much reduced prices, a number of things that would be required at Simla. The fact was that I had become rather indispensable, and I was now to suffer for it. She put a spoke in the wheel of my aspirations and stood between me and them, thus preventing me from fulfilling what was at that time the dearest wish of my heart. I had to swallow my chagrin as best I could, and the pill was not made easier when one day I met Lord Roberts, whose first words were, "I suppose you'll be off to Egypt!"

I had earned two clasps to my last frontier medal and the D.S.O., and with other officers was commanded to proceed to Windsor to receive the decoration at the hands of Queen Victoria. Thither I went in the levée dress of my regiment, and from the station we drove to the castle in royal carriages, where we were received by Lord Edward Pelham-Clinton, the Master of the Household, who directed us to deposit our swords and head-dresses and go upstairs. We had luncheon with the household and I was placed next Lady Antrim—a lady-in-waiting whom I was to know better in later years—and Miss Moore, one of the Queen's Maids of Honour. Others present were Lord Bridport, Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Commerell, Fritz Ponsonby (later Lord Sysonby), and my old friend, Colonel Arthur Davidson. After lunch we adjourned to the long gallery, at one end of which on a low chair was seated the Queen, and standing beside Her Majesty were Lady Antrim, one of the daughters of the Duke of Connaught, and a son of Princess Beatrice.

We were marshalled in single line, two men who were to receive the Victoria Cross being in front, and each of us in turn walked, what seemed to me quite a distance, towards the Queen, making as we advanced three bows and then kneeling in front of her, the right knee on a stool. The Queen, who looked to me to be a tiny old lady, said nothing to any of us, and after we had kissed hands she hung the decoration

on a hook which had been stuck into the breast of our tunics, other medals and decorations having been previously removed.

After bowing again we backed away, and I was rather relieved to emerge without slipping on the highly polished parquet floor, from what was a slightly trying ordeal. Arthur Davidson then took charge of me and I saw a good deal more of the interior of Windsor Castle than I am ever likely again to see. This concluded, I was with other officers desired to write my name in the Queen's birthday book, or in some other record, and soon after we left for town.

During the summer I used occasionally to go to Lord's, and I particularly remember the 20th July, the final day of the Gentlemen and Players' match, when I saw an interesting finale. The day was W. G. Grace's fiftieth birthday, and for that reason the match had been arranged. The scene at the close was a memorable one. Grace went in to bat later than was his custom—ninth, I think—as he was not only walking rather lame but was suffering from a bruised hand, and he and his partner strove their utmost to make the game a draw, and almost did so. For an hour and a quarter they batted against time, for the duration of the game had been extended to seven o'clock. Every stroke was followed by the great crowd with breathless interest, and seventy-five runs were added before Kortright was caught at cover-point by Haigh just ten minutes, by my watch, before time. Both batsmen had taken care that most of the bowling fell to the champion and, with a little luck, for there was no lack of patience, the Players might not have scored a victory.

I think that that was the last occasion on which I saw England's greatest cricketer, for in the years that followed I was mostly abroad or on active service. As a boy at the Edinburgh Academy I remember seeing him and one of his brothers on the Grange cricket-ground playing against Scotland, and one of my school-fellows bowled during a great part of one innings for the northern team.

In the autumn I attended the Army Manœuvres in Wiltshire as a guest of Lord Methuen, with whom were also Lord Errol, General Inigo Jones, Sir John Dickson-Poynder (later Lord Islington), and Mr C. Phipps. In these manœuvres the Duke of Connaught was in command of one side, the other being under General Buller, and before they came to an







Camp at Ali Musjid.

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end I formed the impression that the latter, in spite of his reputation for physical courage, lacked most of the qualifications of a commander in the field—a fact which was to be demonstrated to the disadvantage of the troops three years later in the South African War.

During the manœuvres I spent the greater part of one day in the company of the Secretary of State for War, Lord Lansdowne, who with Lady Lansdowne was staying at Wilton with the Pembrokes, whom I had met some years before at Mount Edgcumbe. When riding that day along a grassy lane something startled Lord Lansdowne's horse, which bolted, shot past me, and went for some distance till the rider recovered control. As, however, he seemed to be a good horseman I cannot say that, with plenty of open ground, I felt alarmed.

The house party at Wilton, where Lord Methuen and I dined several times, included the Duchess of Connaught and her three children, the Duke of Cambridge, General Owen Williams, Lord Durham, Lady Anne Lambton, Cecil Bingham and his wife. It was a cheerful party, and after dinner we used to play childish games—for in those days Bridge had not become a prominent feature—and the Duchess took part with evident enjoyment.

The 2nd September was a date during the manœuvres which I have reason to remember, for the news of the fall of Khartum arrived, and a twinge of annoyance went through me at the thought that but for feminine interference I might have had a chance of being a participant in that battle.

A few weeks later I lunched with Lady Randolph Churchill, when I heard from Winston himself all about the Omdurman campaign, in the thick of which he and Dick Molyneux of the Blues, who had preceded him as orderly officer to Sir William Lockhart, had been. Some time earlier I had been told by Lady Lockhart that the date of the general's and her departure for India was fixed for the 20th October—a fact which had been withheld from me. But this news had lost its interest, though it was obvious that there would, as I thought, have been plenty of time, as in the case of Churchill, for me to share in the campaign and be back in England in time to sail with the general for India.

I have never been prone to cry over spilt milk or solace myself by pouring out my woes to others, so I did my best

to forget the lost opportunity and hoped for better luck in the future. Fate seemed to stand in my way where the country of the Pharaohs was concerned, and I turned my thoughts to the future, little realising that it would provide several years' active service beyond what I had already seen.

The date of our departure was at hand when unexpectedly Sir William Lockhart was commanded to Balmoral to take leave of the Queen. On his return he told me that on the evening of his arrival he had found himself in a quandary. He had inquired from an equerry if frock-dress (knee breeches, &c.), as it is called, which he had taken with him, would be the correct attire at dinner, and to his consternation had been told that it was not worn when the Queen was in residence in Scotland. It was suggested that possibly a pair of the Prince of Wales's trousers, which was available, might solve the difficulty. When, however, it came to the point of trying them on it was seen that, though Sir William's girth did not fall far short of that of His Royal Highness, his stature was so much in excess that with the best will in the world they would not come anywhere near his ankles. As no other pair was forthcoming, it began to look as if the general would have to forgo appearing that evening at the dinner-table; but fortunately he had with him a blue serge suit, in the bifurcated portion of which he was able to be present at the dinner and the audience, which passed off satisfactorily.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### LAST DAYS IN INDIA.

FROM Marseilles, which we left on the 20th October, we arrived at Simla on the 6th November, and, after a tour with the Chief in the Punjab, went to Calcutta for the rest of the winter.

During the remainder of the time I spent in India nothing of particular interest happened, as the life of an officer on the personal staff is only a mixture of social functions, inspections, and touring about with his general. Sir William was not in good health and suffered frequently from indigestion, which sometimes caused him acute pain. The trouble was, I imagine, partly due to the rapidity with which he got through his meals, a failing to which I must also plead guilty and which brought me in later years to the verge of an operation for duodenal ulcer. He was always ready to start off somewhere; but he soon wearied of travelling, more especially as on journeys the same attention to the question of food could not be given as when at Simla or Calcutta, and this caused me a good deal of anxiety at out-of-the-way places.

I had been invited by Sir Chandra Sham Shar Jang, the Prime Minister of Nepal, to take part in a tiger shoot in the *terai*, and a day or two before Christmas I set off to Motihari, the winter home of the resident in Nepal, Colonel Wylie.

When I arrived in what was the country of the indigo planters I was struck with the contrast between it and other parts of India, for the inhabitants were British in a far higher proportion than elsewhere. Sir Humphrey de Trafford, Lord Kensington, F. B. Stapelton-Bretherton, and George Miller, who had come to the East some weeks earlier, were close by in a bungalow belonging to George Miller's brother Charles, of polo and Roehampton fame. De Trafford had brought with him from home a pack of foxhounds, with which I one day had a run, but an indifferent one; and on non-hunting days there were games of polo.

On the 27th the five of us, myself included, started to join the Maharajah, whose camp was some seventy miles from Motihari. We arrived there in the afternoon, and next day were invited to pay our respects to him. The camp was an extensive one, so much so that it made me feel that sport might be a secondary matter. I gathered that, besides the difficulty of locating the tigers in winter, when there is plenty of water everywhere for quenching their thirst and they have not, as in the hot weather, to wander far afield in search of it, royal hosts are given to limiting the number of beasts that might be shot, reserving for guests, such as the Viceroy, the really big battues.

The Maharajah's entourage consisted of some 11,000 persons and included three infantry battalions and a squadron of cavalry. We were told that a tiger had been "ringed" on the previous night—that is to say, one of the numerous baits in the form of live bullocks tied up in the jungle had been killed, and the tiger, after gorging himself, had lain down a few hundred yards from the carcase, where he would sleep and continue the feast on the following night. In order to ring the tiger the procedure is to send out elephants—in this case some three hundred—early in the morning. These at first move in line till the tiger is located, when the flanks are swung round and he is encircled. The beast could now only escape by breaking through the living ring, which would, if the elephants stand staunchly together, involve attacking one of them.

Half an hour after lunch five pad elephants were produced, on each of whose backs was tied a large sack full of straw, on which the rider would lie stretched out and hanging on by a rope. These elephants were much smaller than those on which were howdahs, and a good deal more comfortable, as the latter when on the move roll about from side to side, as does a ship in a storm at sea. We climbed on to our mounts and started off at about five miles an hour in a kind of quick walk. The jungle through which we passed was much thicker than I had imagined it would be, the grass attaining to a height of from ten to fifteen feet.

After we had gone perhaps five miles and crossed several rivers we arrived where the ring had been formed, inside which the tiger was reported to be, though there were no



General Sir William Lockhart, Commander-in-Chief India.

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signs that such was the case. The ring was about one hundred yards in diameter with the elephants disposed all round it close together, their heads facing towards the centre. Just inside there was an open space like a road, some ten feet wide, which had been trampled down so that if the tiger, on being disturbed, should attempt to break through the circle he could more easily be seen than had the jungle been allowed to remain unflattened right up to the forefeet of the elephants.

Before we left camp we had drawn lots as to who should fire the first shot, and de Trafford had been the lucky one. Only in the event of an attempt to break the circle or an attack on an elephant would any person other than he who had won the draw be entitled to fire. This arrangement was no doubt a precautionary measure to avoid promiscuous shooting; but I think the rule was so far relaxed that if the first sportsman registered a miss others might intervene to prevent the escape of the tiger.

The five howdah elephants reserved for us stood side by side as part of the ring, and our guns and rifles were in readiness in a rack at the front of the structure. On each of these elephants was seated a mahout, with his bare legs hanging down behind the ears of the mighty pachyderm. Another native, grasping a knobkerrie with nails in it, was seated above the animal's tail with the object of keeping him from backing out of the ring when the tiger drew near.

Being all perched in our howdahs, rifles in hand and loaded, the next operation was to shift the tiger from his lair, and for this purpose a couple of female elephants, who seemed to be more courageous than the males of the species, pushed their way through the thick grass and undergrowth of a thorny nature. No doubt they knew by their sense of smell when they were near the danger point, and their movement in the required direction was ensured by the mahouts and those armed with knobkerries, who were kept busy with their instruments of persuasion. Then all of a sudden there was a muffled roar and out of his lair sprung a large, long, yellowish-coloured object, which made towards the disturbers of his post-prandial siesta. Like a flash the two elephants who had nearly reached the centre of the ring whisked round and fell back a few yards, while those mounted on their backs exerted themselves to check their flight. This procedure was repeated several times



till the tiger, now thoroughly roused and realising that the moment had come to rid himself of his enemies, made for the clearing just inside the barrier of elephants. After coursing round it for some distance, during which there was much commotion and trumpeting among the bulky quadrupeds, and finding that no exit offered itself for escape, he turned back into the ring, and as he passed near us de Trafford's chance came and with a couple of shots the beast rolled over dead.

We now descended from our perches and with difficulty, owing to the thorny nature of the scrub, struggled through to where he lay, and at once some natives removed his skin.

As no other tiger had been ringed, the elephants were formed into line and we beat homewards, shooting with gun or rifle whatever came in our way. But shooting from the back of a swaying elephant and having at one moment to use one weapon and at the next another does not tend to accuracy, and on the first day that we were out the bag was not a large one. The tiger shot by de Trafford was a fine specimen, measuring nine feet seven inches from muzzle to tip of tail, nineteen inches round the fore-leg, and in height forty-one inches.

After the first day's sport, except for a leopard which I shot, only one other tiger was secured; but the day I had to leave for Calcutta three more were killed, so that had I been able to remain for twenty-four hours longer my turn would have come and I should not have experienced without success my one and only tiger shoot.

When I got back to Calcutta I found that Churchill had arrived to pay a visit to the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, who had succeeded Lord Elgin. He was then writing 'The River War,' in which he described his experiences in the Nile campaign, and he showed me some of the proofs of a book which was to bring him a good deal of literary fame, a foretaste of greater renown in that respect in later years. By this time he had decided to stand for Parliament, and was on the point of sending in his papers and retiring from the Army. In my diary I noted that I would give him ten years to become leader of the House of Commons, and by then or sooner he would have become Secretary of State for India. Both these forecasts, however, turned out to be wrong, and in his meteoric

career the numerous posts he was destined to hold did not include the Indian secretariat.

We were still at Calcutta when Bishop Welldon arrived to take over the diocese. He had been headmaster of Harrow while Churchill was there, and, talking to me one day, he said that he had birched him more frequently than any other boy, but with little effect. This obstreperous, irresponsible pupil had managed to express himself regarding the Head—I imagine in covert terms—in the school magazine; and he added to these interesting disclosures, to my amusement, that on one occasion Churchill had even had the audacity to tell him how to perform his duties.

Soon after this we moved to Simla, and I realised that I was wasting precious days by continuing to be aide-de-camp and that it would be wiser to obtain an appointment on the General Staff. The Chief must have held the same opinion, for one day when riding with him he offered to send me to Jubbulpore as D.A.A.G., where there would shortly be a vacancy. I thanked him, but not very enthusiastically, for I had so far only served with general officers for whom I could feel respect, and the holder of the command at that station had not distinguished himself during the 1897 troubles on the frontier. Fortunately, a few weeks after, Sir Bindon Blood, whom I had known at Rawul Pindi and in the Chitral expedition, was paying a visit to the Chief, and as he knew and understood my feelings regarding the Jubbulpore appointment he said that he too would have a vacancy where he held a command and would be glad if I were earmarked for it. As this was far more to my taste the Chief was spoken to, and I was duly noted for an appointment which I was destined not to hold.

About this time there were strong rumours that there was certain to be a war in South Africa before long, and one day a native soothsayer told me that I would soon have to cross the ocean. I had, however, resolved that nothing would induce me to ask Sir William to be allowed to go on active service after what had happened when I did so prior to the Omdurman campaign. Fortunately, the commanding officer of the 2nd Battalion of my regiment, which was stationed at Umballa, came to pay a visit to the Chief, and as that battalion had been selected to form part of the Indian contingent which

was to be sent to South Africa, he asked me if I were not coming with him and said that he wished me to do so. I replied that for certain reasons I was unwilling to approach the Chief on the subject, on which he said that he would do so. Next morning the Chief informed me that the colonel had asked him to spare me, and that even if the quota of officers with the battalion were exceeded by my rejoining I should do so. I was overjoyed, and what made my satisfaction greater was that I would be in command of the same company as that of which I had been subaltern at Edinburgh when the present commanding officer was my captain.

At this time the Chief used daily to show me the Reuter's cables, which gave the latest news of the coming war and the names of the several generals who had been nominated to hold commands. I had my views regarding one of them, who was to be in chief command, the selection of whom seemed to be unwise, as proved to be the case.

A couple of nights before I left Simla the Chief dined with the Viceroy, and, being on duty, I accompanied him. The party was a small one, and after dinner we had a game of "Pyramids" in which I partnered the Viceroy against the Chief and Sir Archibald Hunter, who, like myself, was about to proceed to South Africa. Since I was a mere aide-de-camp, the Viceroy, who knew that I was starting on active service next day, did not trouble to make any remarks except as regards the game we were playing—which we won. Lady Curzon, however, was as charming as she was beautiful, and when, for the last time, I met her some years later at a dance at Lady Granby's in Arlington Street, she was as agreeable as at Simla.

On the 12th September 1899 I found myself once more starting on active service and walking to the *tonga* station, whither Sir William did me the honour to accompany me, and a few minutes later we parted for the last time.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

AFTER a few busy days at Umballa we left for Bombay, whence on two small vessels the battalion was carried to Durban. I was in a rather pulled-down condition when I left Simla, having developed painful boils, almost carbuncles, so that I was confined to my berth during most of the voyage. When we reached Durban, Macready of my regiment and I were given two days' leave, at the end of which we were to follow the battalion to Ladysmith. We stayed at the Alexandra Hotel, and there I had talks with some colonials. Most of them were very optimistic regarding our prospects in the coming campaign, and some of them went so far as to pooh-pooh the Boers as fighting men, insisting that their marksmanship had of late years deteriorated mainly through the fact that there was less big game in the country than at the time of the last war. One oldish man held a different view and remarked: "Don't pay attention to those fellows. The Boers are a tough lot, as you will find if they make a stand against you." As I had been brought up in the Gordon Highlanders with the story of Majuba in my mind and the wonderfully accurate shooting that had been experienced there, and had known nearly all the officers who had been present on that distressful occasion, I preferred to trust what this elderly colonial maintained rather than accept the views of a younger generation who consumed more neat whisky than could have been good for their stomachs or their nerves.

On the way up-country the special train, on which travelled Sir George White and his staff, caught us up and I had a few words with him; and on reaching Ladysmith I saw on the platform General Penn-Symons, who, when he shook me by the hand, said, "Another campaign together!" This was to be his last, for he fell mortally wounded at the head of

his troops a few days later in the action at Dundee in the north of Natal.

At Ladysmith I found my battalion, which was quartered in wooden huts, one of which I shared with my old friend and brother officer, Claude Miller-Wallnutt.

The following day a report having been received that a force of 3000 Boers with eighteen guns had crossed from the Orange Free State into Natal by the Tintwa Pass and was moving on Acton Holmes, we were ordered to march against it. I have taken part in many such movements and have had to arrange not a few during my career in the Army, but never has it been my fate to share in a worse conducted one than in the wild-goose chase of the 13th October 1899. On this occasion the 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders had been detailed to act as baggage-guard and had been ordered to be ready to move off at 2.45 A.M. Owing to the early hour at which we were to start and the risk of not being aroused in time, I slept, or rather tried to sleep, on a table in our mess hut; but, somewhat debilitated after the voyage to Durban, I did not feel at all fit for what might prove to be a strenuous outing.

It is scarcely credible to relate that by 5.20 A.M., two hours and a half after we paraded, the battalion had got no farther than a mile from our camp. The road leading out of Ladysmith was narrow and had evidently not been reconnoitred beforehand by a staff officer, and until we reached open country we crawled along a few yards at a time gaining a minimum of distance with a maximum of fatigue. By 7.40 we had at last got fairly going, and soon after a long halt was made. The 5th Lancers went ahead to reconnoitre, and some hours later returned with the disappointing news that no trace of the enemy could be found. We were now ordered to turn our steps homewards, but so weak and exhausted was I that only by hanging on to Wallnutt's arm did I get back, dead beat, to Ladysmith.

This day's outing shook my confidence in our leader and his staff. It is apt to be the case that at the opening of a campaign, troops, like a new motor-car, require to be "run in"; but even admitting that to be so, more particularly when battalions have not previously been brigaded together, the way in which on this occasion we were "messed about"—

the men have a more expressive term for the process—augured ill for the future conduct of the campaign in Natal.

Bad staff work, which was prevalent in the South African War, was not only due to ignorant staff officers but to staff officers who could never have been good types of regimental officers, and through ignorance and other deficiencies paid little consideration to the troops. That was where the shoe pinched, and yet it should have been patent that unnecessary fatigue to the rank and file, heavily burdened with arms and equipment, inevitably creates antagonism towards the staff and, worse still, causes lack of faith in leaders. It is unfortunate that this is not better understood by those on whom the lubrication of the military machine depends.

But what was most exasperating regarding this picnic, for it was little else, was that the negative information which was acquired by exhausting several thousand men and horses could have been equally well obtained by the despatch of a well-mounted patrol under an intelligent subaltern of horse, provided, of course, that he had been given definite instructions as to what was required of him.

Not long after this futile march I was, as will be seen, to be the victim of a similar display of the non-observance of the principle of economy of force.

The next few days were occupied in training and in work on defences round Ladysmith, of which the place was innocent. The Boers had now begun to display initiative and were advancing from the north and west, apparently with the object of surrounding and laying siege to the place so as to impede our invasion of their homeland. At this time I was called upon to take the place for some days of a staff officer who had sickened with fever and who was brigade-major to Colonel William Knox, who was in command of the Ladysmith garrison. Colonel Knox was, I believe, known during the campaign as "nasty Knox" to distinguish him from Colonel Charles Knox, known as "nice" Knox, who did a good deal of chasing the ubiquitous Free State leader, Christian de Wet. The commander of the Ladysmith garrison was intolerant of "slackers," and this fact may account for his sobriquet, for he was a first-rate officer with whom to serve and an excellent soldier, as most horse artillerymen are. For many years after the war in South Africa we kept in touch, and during the Great War,

when he was no longer serving, he wrote me some of the wisest and more far-seeing letters which I received from home. After his death his wife, who was at Ladysmith during the siege, sent me his stop-watch and prismatic compass, as well as part of his military library, which is now in the Sir John Moore memorial hall at Shorncliffe.

For a few days I worked under Colonel Knox, but I felt impatient at having to do office drudgery and be away from the officers and men of my company, of whom I had seen very little, and there was always the possibility that I might miss some action in which the battalion was engaged. I was glad, therefore, when on the 19th I was told that I might return to regimental duty.

News soon came that there had been an engagement at Dundee, in the north of Natal, and that I should be wanted to replace a staff officer who had been wounded at Talana Hill. This was followed by an order that five companies of the regiment were to move as soon as possible by rail, to drive off a force which was moving to intervene between our troops farther north and the garrison of Ladysmith.

My company, having just been relieved after twenty-four hours' outpost duty, had the good fortune to be one of the five available, and soon we were proceeding in cattle trucks to the scene of action, which was not far off, and detrained in open country. We now marched in rear of one of our artillery brigades, which was in action, over which Boer shells were whistling and doing little damage. Next we extended company by company, swinging round in the direction from which the firing was coming, and then moved against the position which the Boers were occupying.

Sir George White now appeared, having ridden out from Ladysmith, cantering by on our left flank accompanied by a few of his staff, and as he passed he gave me a wave of recognition. I noticed how proud he looked to see his regiment—the old 92nd—going into action, and imagined how his thoughts must be carried back to the days when he so often led it to victory in the Afghan War, where he won the Victoria Cross.

The rifle fire became heavier as we neared the Boer position, and I felt a heavy blow on my left leg, below the knee, but although it knocked me down I was able to struggle to a ridge







Armoured Train passing Frere Station.

*[To face p. 137.]*

on which my colonel was standing. Noticing my condition, he ordered me to fall out, and I did so unwillingly, for I thought that I could still scramble on, and the other officers with the company were two young and inexperienced recently-joined lads. They had not got much farther forward when they, too, were severely wounded, one of them mortally, and were carried back to where I lay.

At the time of the action of Elandslaagte we were not what is known as "camouflaged," for we were wearing kilts and sporrans and carrying drawn claymores, which made us conspicuous and a good mark for the Boer rifles. Moreover, the sun, which was setting, fell full on us and made us an easy target against the dark background. It is not surprising, therefore, that in our first action of the war our casualties were heavy, amounting among the officers to 70 per cent, while those of the rank and file totalled about a third of that figure.

It was late at night when I got back whence I had started twelve hours earlier. I was conveyed to a Dutch church which was being used as a hospital, and three days later, my bed being required for another wounded officer, I was evacuated to Pietermaritzburg. Here I and other officers were taken to what had been the officers' mess of the 5th Lancers, that regiment having moved to Ladysmith at the opening of hostilities. There was much to find fault with as regards the way this temporary hospital was being administered, though the civil doctor who did the surgical work was in no way responsible. The monotony of existence was relieved by visits from several ladies who were residents of Pietermaritzburg, among whom was Mrs Goldman, a daughter of the then Speaker of the House of Commons, who was most attentive to us all, and another visitor was the Governor of Natal, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, who kept me supplied with reading matter.

As the days went by and the administration of the hospital showed no signs of improvement I persuaded Dr Johnstone, the civil surgeon, to let me move to lodgings until I was fit for duty. I could now limp about, and it was suggested that, provided with a horse, I might be employed in laying out the trace of defences for the town on its northern side such as to prevent its capture by a *coup de main*.

Soon an opportunity, more imaginary than real, offered

itself for a return to the front, and I made my way along with a young officer, who was about to join my regiment, to Estcourt, which at this time was the most advanced point on the line of communication to Ladysmith, hoping that I might be allowed to traverse the Boer lines which encircled that place and rejoin my regiment, which formed part of the garrison.

On arriving at Estcourt I was attached to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, whose duty was to provide outposts and man an armoured train which used daily to proceed towards the Tugela, a river which ran between us and the beleaguered town.

My wounded limb was not yet sound and I was excused attending parades and taking part in the activities of the armoured train. As the days passed, Winston Churchill, who was acting as war correspondent of the 'Morning Post,' appeared on the scene, and I spent a good deal of time with him and others of the Press. Here I met for the first time Leopold Amery, who was organising the several correspondents of 'The Times' at the seat of war, and I came to the conclusion that should he go into politics he would before long find himself in the Cabinet. Other war correspondents who made their appearance on the Natal front at this early period of the war were a brother of Lord Cawdor, who represented a United States newspaper agency, and J. B. Atkins, who was then or later on the staff of the 'Manchester Guardian.'

Since the days of which I am writing I have sometimes thought that I made a mistake in leaving Maritzburg and flying in the face of fortune, a course which is apt to immerse one in a sea of troubles. In this instance it certainly did so, and many vicissitudes had to be overcome before I regained the shore which I had quitted so light-heartedly.

At this period of the war the force at Estcourt seemed to me to be rather "in the air." General Joubert was advancing southwards, cautiously and tentatively, but troops to oppose him would soon be arriving from England under the command of General Buller. On the evening of the 14th November, Colonel Cooper, who commanded the Dublin Fusiliers, warned me that the company which I commanded, of which the subaltern was Tom Frankland, a particularly nice young officer, had been detailed for duty with the armoured train

on the following day, and he directed me to report myself to Colonel Long, who was in command of the troops.

Up to this time, as I have said, I had not had to take out the armoured train, which was one only in name and had been extemporised by the railway workshops, but from what I had heard officers say who had had that experience I cannot confess that I received the warning to do so with pleasure.

The country, I must explain, between Estcourt and the Tugela, is rolling in nature, and for mounted troops, such as were the Boers, there would be little difficulty in putting the train out of action by destroying the line after it had passed some suitable spot, so as to prevent its return to the place whence it started. The gradients of the line, as I was soon to learn, were steep, and the puffing locomotive whose job it was to haul the heavy vehicles behind it would advertise its oncoming in an unmistakable manner. I betook myself to the brigade office with a heart full of misgivings, for so long as the Boers had been at a distance there was little risk in sending out the train, while now the position of affairs wore a very different aspect.

When I presented myself to Colonel Long, whom I had not before met and did not know whether he was a cautious officer or the reverse, he told me, as if he were lavishing a favour, that besides my company of the Dublin Fusiliers he was giving me another of the Durban Light Infantry, a volunteer unit, and a 7-pounder gun, with its detachment from H.M.S. *Tartar*. Had he known anything of the country in which the train was to operate—one where hostile guns could readily be concealed in places close to the railway line, in positions from which to fire without warning—he would surely have modified so inappropriate an order.

My duty, he said, was to reconnoitre with caution towards Colenso and, while remaining out all day in observation, send back reports from time to time. I need hardly point out that a single man on horseback would have sufficed to accomplish what was required, and that in doing what he wanted it was the height of folly to expose to risk the lives of some three hundred men. I may mention that when serving under General Walter Kitchener, the youngest brother of the Field-Marshal of that name, he told me that when, on the 15th November, he heard that the armoured train had been sent

on its daily mission, with fuller knowledge than was placed at my disposal as to the strength and disposition of the Boers, he exclaimed to Colonel Long that in despatching the train that morning he had sent the occupants to their death, and he added that he had no expectation of ever again seeing any of us.

As I came out of the office feeling rather lugubrious I noticed Churchill, who, as well as some other correspondents, was hanging about to pick up such crumbs of information for his newspaper as might be available. I told him what I had been ordered to do and, aware that he had been out in the train and knew something of the country through which it was wont to travel, suggested that he might care to accompany me next day. Although he was not at all keen he consented to do so, and arranged to be at the station in time for the start.

Before I went to sleep that night I lay for some time thinking what I would do should the Boers ambush the train and cause it to leave the rails, and I decided what would have to be done would be to keep their fire in check while the line was being cleared. This, as it turned out, was exactly what happened less than twelve hours later.

Next morning, before leaving my tent, having a presentiment of coming evil, I told my servant to pack up my things and take care of them in my absence.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE ARMoured TRAIN DISASTER.

THE morning of the 15th November was chilly and a slight drizzle was falling which, with a mist, restricted the view of the country around. Frankland and I walked to the station, and soon Churchill appeared. The gun had already been placed on the leading truck, next to which was an armoured wagon, then followed the locomotive and two armoured wagons, and, last of all, a low truck on which were materials for repairing the line should it be damaged. The necessary platelayers, as also the telegraphist with his instrument for connecting with the wires at the several stations *en route*, took their places on this truck. The Dublin Fusiliers climbed into the leading armoured wagon, but as it would not contain them all the balance travelled with the Durban Light Infantry in one of the vehicles that came behind the engine. The only means of entering the wagons was by climbing over one of the loopholed sides, the tops of which were at some height from the ground; and as the view from the interior was a good deal restricted, Churchill and I took our places on the gun truck.

At 5.10 we started, stopping at Frere, where there was an iron bridge which spanned the Blau Krantz River. Thence, after telegraphing to Estcourt that nothing of a hostile nature had been seen, we continued the journey, climbing up a steep gradient, after reaching the top of which we ran down the reverse slope to Chieveley. As we approached that place a couple of Boer wagons, hauled by lengthy teams of oxen, became visible perhaps a mile to our left front, and as I was considering what action I should take, the telegraphist handed me the following message which he had received after getting into touch with headquarters. This message had been despatched by Colonel Long and was as follows: "Remain at

Frere in observation guarding your safe retreat. Remember that Chieveley station was last night occupied by the enemy. Do not put faith in information obtained from native sources." The fact that the Boers had arrived as far south as Chieveley on the previous day had not been imparted to me, but on arrival there this was obvious, for everything about the station, which was little more than a platform and a shed, showed signs of a hostile visitation.

I do not wish to lay blame on anyone but myself, but had I been alone and not had my impetuous young friend Churchill with me, who in many things was prompted by Danton's motto, *de l'audace, et encore de l'audace et toujours de l'audace*, I might have thought twice before throwing myself into the lion's jaws by going almost to the Tugela. But I was carried away by his ardour and departed from an attitude of prudence, which in the circumstances was desirable considering that we were confronting a force which was in process of invading British territory. I therefore telegraphed to Colonel Long what I had just seen and intimated that the train was about to return to Frere.

I must mention that once inside the armoured wagon in front of and next to the locomotive the sole means of communicating with the driver was by pressing a button which rang an electric bell in the cab of the engine, and by this method one could indicate whether it was required that he should halt, advance, or retire.

We moved slowly homewards till the col was reached from which on our outward journey we had come in view of Chieveley, whence looking to the left the high ground was on that side and hid everything behind it. I now signalled to the driver to stop and, as my wounded leg, though healed, was stiff and did not allow me to climb in and out of a wagon with facility, handed my binoculars to Churchill and asked him to run up the hillside and note if the ox-wagons which we had seen earlier were still moving south.

Up to this time I had no premonition of coming danger, though a little reflection would have shown that the Boers were not likely to be anywhere but ahead of their baggage wagons and with their fighting troops well on the way to Est-court. However, only a few moments had passed after Churchill left the wagon when either someone said that he could see

something on the hill above us or I myself had a feeling that the unexpected was about to happen. This caused me to blow my whistle and signal my scout to come back. Hardly had he climbed into the wagon than the report of a gun close by from the direction of the hill was heard, and almost simultaneously a shell passed overhead unpleasantly near, just missing us, I imagine. Forthwith I pressed the button indicating to the driver to retire down the gradient towards home, and the train, picking up speed, hurried us in that direction. I think that I and my companions felt rather elated as the pace grew faster and faster, little imagining what was in store for us. We had almost reached the level when all of a sudden there came a terrific bump and we were flung on to the floor of the wagon.

At the part of the line at which the leading truck had arrived there was a curve, and the Boers, who had watched us steaming forward towards Chieveley, had had plenty of time to place stones between the double rails, for at this point there was a guard rail on account of the curve in the track. The effect of this was to cause the truck that carried the breakdown material to jump and turn upside down, clear of the metals. The next vehicle to it, an armoured wagon, was overturned at the side of the permanent way, and its neighbour of the same nature became jammed between it and the engine, blocking our further progress towards safety. Fortunately, when the derailment occurred, we overshot a small bridge over the bed of a dried-up stream some twenty feet below, into which the Boers had no doubt intended that the wagons should one after another be precipitated, and had the train not been running at a considerable speed this would have happened.

For a few seconds I was so dazed by the suddenness of the crash that the power of collecting my thoughts to decide what had best be done deserted me, but Churchill, quick witted and cool, was speedily on his feet. He volunteered to see what the situation was, and soon he returned with the suggestion that if I could keep in check the fire from the Boer guns and rifles, which had opened from the surrounding hills, he thought he might manage to get the line cleared. As my association with him had only been military, I naturally regarded him from that point of view. I knew him well enough



to realise that he was not the man to stand quietly by and look on in a critical situation, and it flashed across my mind that he could not be better employed than in a semi-military sense such as he suggested. The subaltern of the company was a young officer with no war service, who knew the non-commissioned officers and men much better than I did and would be more useful with them than in superintending the clearance of the line. I therefore gladly accepted Churchill's offer and directed him to undertake what he proposed. His self-selected task, into which he threw all his energy, was carried out with pluck and perseverance, and his example inspired the platelayers, the driver of the locomotive, and others to work under the fire which the Boers were directing on the train. As for myself I ordered the gun to be manned by the sailors and to open fire on the enemy's artillery, which was engaging us from three separate spots, and to save time it was used from the truck. Either the recoil or a direct hit soon put it out of action and the gun crew was withdrawn.

So many years have passed since the incident of the Chievely armoured train that I will not disguise the fact that it took more than verbal persuasion to keep the loopholes of the wagon continuously manned. Once the firing was started it went steadily on, and I believe, if those who captured us are to be trusted, that in spite of the range it impeded their efforts to interfere with Churchill's activities.

Opposed to us were several guns that fired from 900 to 1400 yards, and, cooped up as we were in the wagon, I felt that every moment must be our last, as the shells struck it and the shrapnel crashed overhead. It crossed my mind that our situation was comparable to what it would be if under fire of rifles at one hundred yards' range, while packed inside a large biscuit tin.

From time to time I sent one of the Fusiliers to find out how the work of clearing the line was progressing. The reports were encouraging, and I had confidence that Churchill could be left alone to carry out the job and that it was wiser not to meddle with him. Later in the day he told me that his relief was great at finding himself outside the armoured wagon, for the protection it afforded was more imaginary than real.

After a time, and after being bumped about through the moving to and fro of the engine which was coupled to our

wagon and kept pushing against the obstructing vehicle, someone uncoupled us, and thereafter the rifle fire could be more steadily and better aimed.

Suddenly I heard Churchill's voice and I climbed out of the wagon and joined him near the engine, which looked to me as if it were in a bad way, for flames were issuing from the fire-box and volumes of steam pouring out from other parts of it. He had succeeded in getting it past the obstructing wagon, and it seemed as if it might be possible to move up to it the one from which I had been keeping up fire. An attempt to do so, however, showed that the width of the wagon was such as to make that impossible, for after the engine had with difficulty been forced past the obstructing one it would not be safe to bring it back again to haul clear the rest of the train.

I came to the conclusion that the sole chance of escape would be to despatch the men along the line to Frere station, which was about half a mile distant. Once there we might be able to hold out until assistance could arrive from Estcourt, which was, however, improbable, as that place was seventeen miles away.

In order to protect the men as they made their way along the line I hailed the driver and instructed him to go slowly, intending that the engine should take the place of a rear-guard and act as a shield for the detachment. I then called to Frankland to get the men out of the wagon, and as they came on to the line I told them to make independently for Frere station. As I could not keep pace with them I climbed on to the step of the engine, but as someone in front of me tramped on my fingers I let go and fell backwards to the ground. When I picked myself up the engine had gone some distance, and no shouting on my part would have caused the driver to stop.

The men were now streaming along the line, which had on either side of it a barbed-wire fence, and the Boers had not ceased firing, for bullets and shells were striking the ground all around. I was feeling desperate at the hopeless situation into which my haste had brought me, and I prayed fervently that one of the bullets would come my way and put an end to the business. At this juncture both my putties came undone, and as I was stooping to tie them up a man called to me to

catch hold of the loose ends—a good idea, which I at once adopted, though it made progress slower.

Before the engine left the scene of action, noticing several rifles lying about, I picked them up and flung them on to the tender, as well as Churchill's hat, which was on the ground.

Followed by the soldier, I had got some way towards Frere when I saw a body of men galloping for the railway bridge at that place. I shouted to Frankland, who was a good way ahead, to try to prevent the movement, but the men were too scattered for anything to be done, and the next thing I noticed was a crowd on the bridge and white handkerchiefs being waved. Horrified, I hurried on as fast as I could, and as I got near, rifles were pointed at me and a voice shouted, "Put down your arms!" Having nothing in my hand but a walking-stick I replied, "I have no arms." The rifles were at once lowered and the next thing that happened was that I was seized by a stalwart Boer who tried to wrench from me my Zeiss glasses. As I was resisting, someone called out, "Better let him have them or he'll shoot you!" so discretion took the better part of valour and they fell to him as his share of the plunder.

Churchill now appeared on the scene, having left the engine on which he had ridden and returned "to see the fun."

We were marched off to the high ground held by the main Boer force, and here a crowd of men, who looked like farmers, were busy cleaning their rifles, and I had some conversation with an officer of the Staats artillery who spoke English. He inquired why, placed in so hopeless a plight, we had not at once surrendered, and congratulated me for having resisted so long. He remarked that the regularity with which the train had been sent out daily had not escaped notice and that it had been settled to capture it when the best opportunity offered. He mentioned that his guns had fired some ninety rounds at us and wondered how anyone had survived the ordeal. I resisted the temptation to congratulate him on the indifferent shooting, thanks to which we were alive! It was evident that we had had a considerable force opposed to us—in fact, the whole of Joubert's troops which he was bringing south for the invasion of Natal, some 6500 men and several batteries of artillery.

Almost immediately afterwards Churchill was led away

under escort to Boer headquarters, for it would seem that our captors had discovered who had fallen into their hands. He was not long absent, and on his return we were directed to fall in and move to Colenso, which was distant some six miles.

At this time we were all feeling, not unnaturally, very disconsolate, but Churchill must have been cheered by the thought, which he communicated to me, that what had taken place, though it had caused the temporary loss of his post as war correspondent, would help considerably in opening the door for him to enter the House of Commons. As we trudged along wearily over the damp veldt he remarked to me that in allotting him what I might call the "star turn" I had effaced myself, while his work of clearing the line had brought him into prominence and in full view of the Durban Light Infantry and the railway personnel, and that those of them who had escaped on the engine would not fail to make the most of what they had seen when they got back to Estcourt. He added that so far as I was concerned he would at first opportunity publish the facts in his newspaper, to which, while thanking him, I replied that being satisfied that I had done my duty and acted in what I considered the wisest way in the circumstances, no explanation as to what had occurred was necessary.

On arriving at Colenso station we were locked up in a goods shed, and thoughts of escape ran through my head. It seemed possible after nightfall that one might reach the rafters of the building and then break through a skylight, attain the roof, and drop to the ground on the side farthest from that on which the door was, where a watch would be kept. There would probably be no guard at the back of the shed, and, even if there were, one might in the dark and heavy rain succeed in escaping notice. Much of the journey, some twenty-four miles only, on foot back to Ladysmith could be accomplished before morning, and once past Joubert's force there would be little possibility of recapture. But a feeling of depression, not to say exhaustion, after the strain through which we had passed, caused us to decide to postpone the attempt till later.

And here I realise that I committed an error of judgment, one which is not uncommonly made by those who have the misfortune to become prisoners-of-war. I think that it is a

cardinal fact that no time should be lost in effecting one's escape, for every mile one is removed deeper into the enemy's country it will be found that the precautions to prevent this become greater, whereas in the confusion that may follow after capture, and the possible weakness of guards, chances arise that may not offer themselves later.

After a cold and cheerless night we were ordered to prepare ourselves for the road, and soon the melancholy procession was under way. After crossing the Tugela and going some miles we came in view of the captive balloon which seemed to hover like an angel of evil over Ladysmith, and soon the boom of the Boer "Long Tom" fell on our ears. During the afternoon we arrived at one of the camps that overlooked the little township, and Churchill was soon involved in a discussion with certain of its occupants regarding the rights and wrongs of the war. That night again our thoughts reverted to the question of escape, and one could not help regretting the chance that had been lost twenty-four hours earlier. The moon was full, brilliantly lighting up the surroundings of the camp, while the tent in which we were lodged was guarded at front and back.

On the day following a circuit was made round the eastern side of Ladysmith, and I thought of my regiment within and felt ashamed to be the only individual belonging to it who was in the hands of the Boers. The march was continued till we came again to the railway line, and there we were joined by Sergeant-Major Brockie of the Imperial Light Horse. He told us that while out scouting on the previous night he had been captured, and, like ourselves, was bound for Pretoria, a train for which place was about to start.

It did not take long to find out that he knew both the Dutch and Kaffir languages, and then and there we plotted to escape at the end of the journey. Before his capture Brockie had removed from his hat and coat the badges of his corps and given out later that he was a lieutenant in the Natal Carabineers, for the Light Horse, being recruited at Johannesburg, was exceedingly unpopular with the Boers. As he was afraid of being confined with the rank and file we arranged to maintain the fiction that he was an officer.

On our journey nothing of particular interest occurred, but on reaching Pretoria we found ourselves to be the objects

of much attention. On leaving the train, Brockie, to my dismay, was led away with the rank and file, but after examination, during which he managed to persuade his questioner that he was what he professed to be, he joined us at the Model School. It looked as if Churchill, too, might be separated from us, since he was a war correspondent, but I explained to a burly, evil-looking police officer that he ranked as an officer, and, though he left us for a brief space, he, like Brockie, appeared at the school.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### A PRISONER AT PRETORIA.

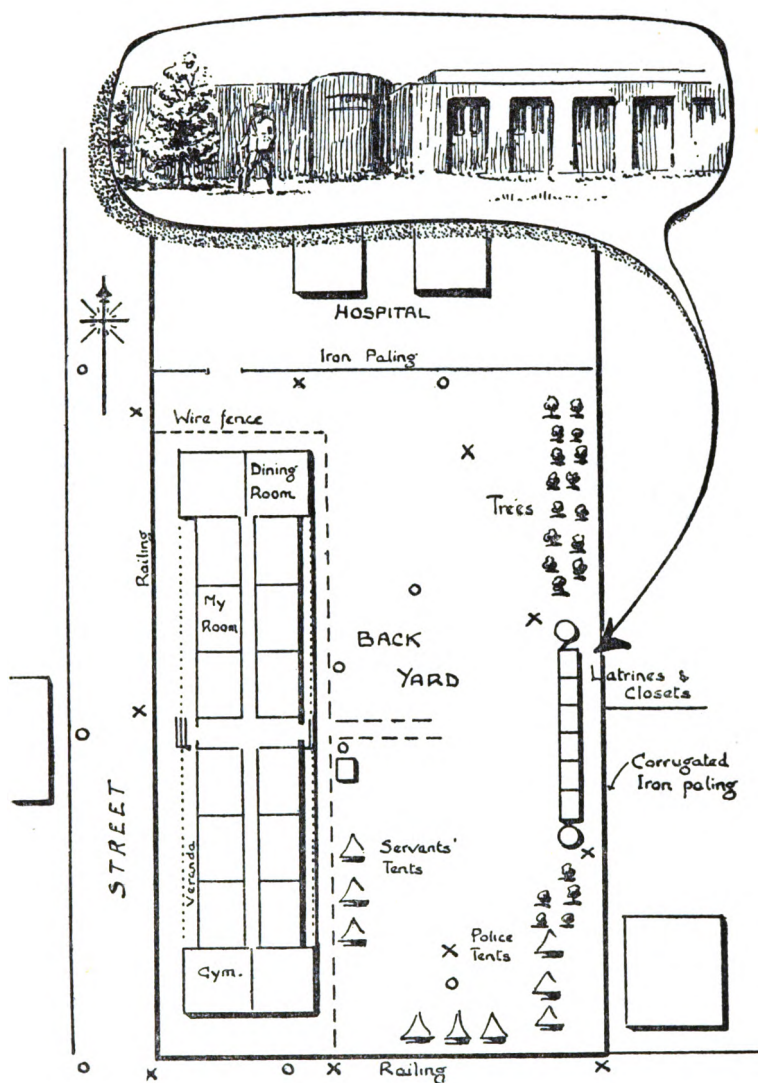
THE building where I was to be held in durance for several months and whence I succeeded in escaping requires that it should be described. No sooner were we within the iron railings which surrounded it than the occupants of the verandah, amongst whom I recognised some acquaintances, left their seats and beset us with inquiries as to how and where we had been taken prisoners and what was the latest news of the war.

The Staats Model School was a substantial single-storeyed red brick edifice which stood at the corner of one of the parallelograms into which Pretoria is subdivided, its length running approximately north and south. It contained sixteen school-rooms and lecture halls, and a central passage extended almost throughout its length, terminated by the end rooms. Across the passage was another short one from the front entrance to the door opening on the backyard or playground. On both front and back of the building was a verandah which extended along the exterior of the six rooms, and this again was overlapped by the four end rooms, one of which was fitted as a gymnasium and another was used as a fives-court.

Outside, a railing, breast high, ran round the west and south sides, the remaining sides being enclosed by a corrugated-iron paling six and a half feet high. In addition to these, a wire netting ten feet high ran parallel to the paling but close to the building, probably to protect the windows from footballs, and through this an opening immediately facing the back door led to the gravel-covered backyard.

Across the yard, in which were the tents for our soldier servants and the police guard, were closets which at the date of our arrival were connected with the corrugated-iron paling already referred to, and a double row of trees ran close to it. At night the yard was illuminated by four electric lights. On the two sides of the building which did not face the street

# PLAN OF STAATS MODEL SCHOOL, PRETORIA.



Approx Scale  
0 10 yds 20 yds

X --- Sentries O --- Elec. lights

Note - The Closets are shown as clear of the paling - so that sentries could patrol behind them - an arrangement made after Churchill's escape.



were private houses in gardens, those on the north side being used as a Red Cross hospital, with a door of communication in the iron paling which gave access to the school-yard. The houses across the street were inhabited.

The guard in charge of our security at the time of our arrival consisted of three corporals and twenty-seven men of the South African Republican Police (called for short, Zarps), and these furnished nine sentries in reliefs of four hours' duration. They were armed with rifles and revolvers and carried whistles. Five of the sentries were posted outside the enclosure and the remainder within, and the police were forbidden to approach nearer to us than the opposite side of the street. No vehicle, horse, or bicycle was permitted to pass the school; and even dogs were driven away, presumably lest they should be the bearers of messages.

The town was guarded, principally for the protection of property and for the arrest of suspicious persons, by special constables, who were posted in every street and armed with revolvers. These constables mounted duty at 6 or 7 P.M., according to the hour of sunset, and after 10 P.M. were required to demand passes from persons walking in the town.

To my surprise we were allowed to wear plain clothes, and were even provided with a suit and other necessities on arrival.

In charge of us was a Boer commandant, a rough diamond called Opperman, and a Hollander, Dr Gunning. I made a point of keeping on good terms with both, but some of the officers fell out with the former and gained nothing by so doing.

As regards the food arrangements I cannot complain, for my feelings were those of disgust at being a prisoner and cut off, at any rate for a time, from sharing in the war, and the question of nutrition, except what was necessary to keep body and soul together, had but little interest for me. Moreover, being fully resolved to escape as soon as a satisfactory plan could be evolved, my thoughts from morning to night were occupied with the ways and means of effecting my purpose. I took care to keep myself as fit as possible by joining in the games that went on in the backyard and by playing fives and skipping for long spells at a time to harden the soles of my feet.

The first plan for terminating our enforced incarceration was to climb out of the backyard at the spot where the latrines

were situated, and the place chosen was one on which the lights illuminating the yard did not shine. A sentry was posted there, and it had been noted that during the dinner hour he sometimes would stroll along the line of the corrugated-iron paling until he met the sentry who generally stood not far from the door that led into the Red Cross hospital. Once outside the yard we would make our way through the adjoining garden into the street, keeping clear of the sentries, and reach the railway line to Delagoa Bay. It had been ascertained that a mixed train left Pretoria nightly at 11.10 P.M., and it was proposed to board one of the trucks at some steep gradient and so reach the Portuguese border, 294 miles distant. The information regarding the train, police arrangements, and so on took time to collect, but early in December the plan was ripe for execution.

On the 17th of that month two of our soldier servants broke out and escaped, having climbed over the paling while the officers were at dinner, but they did not get far, and when captured were transferred to where the rank and file were confined. The escape of these men made one feel that no time must be lost, and all that was required was a slack and unobservant sentry, one who during the dinner-hour would move a few paces from his beat and furnish the necessary opportunity.

Up to this time Churchill, being a war correspondent and non-combatant, had had some hopes of release; but on the 9th December he told me that they were dissipated and, knowing that Brockie and I intended to escape, he suggested coming with us. When he approached me on the subject I did not hide from him how greatly, in my opinion, his presence would add to the risk of capture. At this time there were no roll calls or other means of checking the number of prisoners, and I felt confident that neither Brockie nor I would be missed perhaps for several days, the more so because we had been careful to avoid in any way drawing attention upon ourselves, as some of the officers had done.

On the other hand, Churchill was in the habit of receiving numerous visitors with whom he engaged in animated discussions on the all-absorbing topic of who was to blame for the war. He was not particularly communicative with his fellow prisoners, except Frankland, for whom he had a liking,

and myself, and would show signs of impatience when one of the younger among them indulged in the exasperating practice of whistling, which seems to be mainly confined to the British, for he no doubt felt that such a display of light-heartedness did not sit well on those in the clutches of the enemy. By the Boers, I am sure, he was regarded as a hostage of value, and his absence would certainly have been noticed within twelve hours or less of his disappearance—a limit of time which would not have allowed a sufficient space to elapse in order to give us a chance of reaching the frontier.

At this point I must digress for a moment to explain how it came about that Churchill's hopes of release as a non-combatant had evaporated on the 9th December. Actually his fate had not been settled by that date, but the matter must have been under consideration. This came to my knowledge some three and a half years later when I was holding a staff appointment at the War Office. On the 13th July 1903 a copy of a Boer telegram, the original of which fell into the hands of our troops after Pretoria had been occupied by Lord Roberts, was sent to me by an officer on the staff of the military historian of the war in South Africa, whose duty it was to examine all captured Boer correspondence. This telegram was dated the 10th December 1900 and had been despatched by General Joubert to the Acting Commandant General, Pretoria, in reply to another of the same date. Its terms were as follows : "I agree to the exchange proposed, but am resolved against that of Churchill or of the conceited officer on General White's staff [I think this was Major Adye] captured on 30th October [the date of the affair of Nicholson's Nek], or of the officers who were last captured in the armoured train beyond Colenso. . . ."

From this telegram it seems clear that in no circumstances were Churchill, Frankland, or I to be included among such officers as might be proposed for exchange. Perhaps we came under the head of desperate characters !

But to proceed. In pressing me to agree to his accompanying us and allowing him to profit by our plan, Churchill held out the bait that, if successful, my name would not be hidden under a bushel—in other words, I would share "in a blaze of triumph," such as, according to an account in the 'Strand Magazine,' he enjoyed on reaching Durban. But advertisement has never appealed to me, though it has helped

many a man in his career. I was determined to escape, cost what it might, and I knew that under the Army Act it was the duty of everyone who saw his chance of doing so to take it. My only anxiety was that my talkative friend would by his presence compromise the chances of success. He had, however, done gallant work at the armoured train mishap, for which he has always earned my unstinted praise. Like me, he was eating his heart out at our incarceration, and I was loth to seem ungenerous, as would be the case if I went without him. I replied, therefore, that as Brockie had a share in the venture it was only right that I should talk the matter over with him before I could give a reply. This I did and, as I expected, he was strongly opposed to the addition to the party. I then told him that Churchill, at my invitation, had accompanied the armoured train and that I could not repay him by leaving him in the lurch. This I repeated to Churchill and said that in face of my companion's opposition I would not invite him to come with us, but would leave it to him to decide what he would do. He at once replied that he wished to come, which settled the matter; and he added that we must not blame him if, through his presence with us, we happened to be retaken. To this I did not demur, but I took care to make it plain that he would be expected to conform to orders. Next I told him in general terms what the plan was, but not in detail, as he would be in my company.

As it would be difficult for all three of us to climb out of the latrine at the same time, Brockie was to follow as soon as it was known that Churchill and I had crossed the Rubicon. I had noticed that he did not take part in the various games, such as fives, rounders, and skipping, which had been started by the other prisoners to keep themselves fit and the soles of their feet hard. This led me to conclude that his agility might be at fault; and, moreover, as the height of the roof of the latrine was about seven feet he might not be able to reach it without a "leg up," from the fact that one of his shoulders was weak through its having been dislocated when playing polo in India. There was, too, the danger that in his struggles to mount he might kick the metal sides of the structure and attract the notice of the sentry should he not have moved away from his post. I do not exaggerate when I say that the major part of my anxiety at this time about the success of the escape arose from his accession to the party. With

Brockie only as an associate there was nothing to fear, but with another accomplice, and he the impulsive and talkative Churchill, the matter wore a very different aspect. But the wine was drawn and it had to be drunk.

The night of the 11th December came and we decided to go if possible. About 6.50 P.M.—ten minutes before the dinner hour—Churchill and I crossed over the backyard to the latrine in company with several officers who knew what was intended and who would, one by one, leave it, and perhaps cause the sentry to move from his post thinking that all had gone. If he acted as usual he would move along the line of trees to talk to his neighbour, and then would come our chance to climb over into the garden adjacent to the school. On this occasion, however, he displayed no inclination to emerge from the corner in which he stood, and after waiting what seemed to be a quarter of an hour, though it cannot have been as much, we whispered together and decided that to go was impossible.

Another day of anxiety came, and in the afternoon Churchill's excited condition, as he strode up and down the backyard with lowered head and hands clasped behind his back, showed the other prisoners that there was something unusual in the wind. He said to me, "We must go to-night," to which I replied that there were three of us and that we certainly would if the chance was favourable.

There is many a slip, as the proverb has it, and that was to be proved on this occasion, for matters did not go "according to plan." It will at this point be best to draw a veil over subsequent events, but in doing so it must not be supposed that I acquiesce in the many versions of this episode which, from time to time, have appeared over the names of other, often distinguished, writers.

I must confess that I was bitterly disappointed, and I resist the temptation of stating what Brockie said on the subject. But I refused to allow my mind to dwell on the failure and swallowed my chagrin on the principle that—

" Things without remedy  
Should be without regard ; what's done is done,"

and devoted all my thoughts to the question of getting out of the school and on to the veldt in some other way.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### ANOTHER PLAN OF ESCAPE.

THE war correspondent of the 'Morning Post,' having successfully evaded the vigilance of the guard and, so far as we knew, got clear of the Boer capital, the next thing, no matter our feelings of annoyance, was to conceal that fact for as long a time as possible, so as to give him a good start on his journey to the frontier. To effect this a dummy figure was contrived and placed in his bed, and this had so natural an appearance that when, on the morning of the 13th, a soldier servant arrived with a cup of coffee for the now absent one, he placed it on a chair beside where he supposed he lay, but failed to notice that the person for whom it was intended was inanimate.

The hour of discovery could not long be deferred, but enough time might be gained to give the escaper a start of ten hours; and not till nine-thirty, when a roll call was for the first time called, was it ascertained that one of the flock was absent. By then I surmised that the missing one, if he had managed to board the night train, would be at least fifty miles west of Pretoria and well out of reach of any search that might be made either within or in the vicinity of the town.

It is interesting to note that Mr de Souza, the Secretary for War in the Transvaal Government, told me on the 13th that his fellow ministers were indifferent as to the recapture of Churchill; but the telegram which I have earlier quoted gives the lie to that statement.

Two days later a draft for £100 arrived from my cousin, Richard Haldane, which, with the aid of Lord Rothschild, he had succeeded in transmitting to Pretoria for my benefit. I was not able to cash it until later when, during my escape, I obtained in exchange for it one hundred sovereigns in Transvaal gold.

Many drastic changes now took place, some of them

instituted to cause the prisoners annoyance, and one of these promised to stand in the way of future schemes of evasion.

The plan of the Model School (facing page 150) shows the offices at the back of the yard as disconnected with the corrugated-iron paling, an arrangement which was only introduced after Churchill's escape, and which allowed the sentries to patrol behind them. The lower branches of the trees were now cut and the reflectors of the arc-lights adjusted so that no spot remained in shade. The sentries, whose rifles were ordered to be kept loaded, were placed under the supervision of the inspector of police, who was a German, and every night he would visit them to make sure that they were vigilant. Added to this the whole of the police guard, who up to this time had the duty of ensuring the security of the prisoners, were despatched to the front and replaced by others who, it was hoped, would prove more trustworthy.

While these measures, introduced to prevent a repetition of what had occurred on the night of the 12th, were in progress nothing definite could be settled regarding future plans; but they were only in abeyance. One day we raided a locked cupboard in one of the rooms which was not in occupation. This proved to be fruitful, and amongst the treasure-trove were some screwdrivers, a file and, best of all, a pair of wire-cutters, which we supposed had been abstracted from the pupils and which we hoped to turn to account later on.

Our plan of escape now took another form which, in view of the changes just referred to, seemed more suited to the circumstances.

On arrival at the school the idea of digging our way to freedom had crossed our minds, but so long as there was a possibility of escaping without going below ground the subterranean project was put aside. This, I think, was partly due to the fact that work of that nature would be protracted, and I had a horror of the possibility of being buried alive. Brockie, on the other hand, who had had experience of mining at Johannesburg, suffered no such qualms, and on debating the question it was decided that escape through the sentry line having become so difficult, we must start work at once after the manner of the mole. Le Mesurier of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, a man of powerful physique, who was to be my

companion in our successful escape, was invited by Frankland, who was his bosom friend, to join the five occupants of our room, so that the six of us could be divided for tunnelling purposes into three reliefs.

This detail having been arranged, on Sunday, the 17th, while a service was being held by one of our fellow prisoners, the Rev. Adrian Hofmeyer, we seized the opportunity to make a preliminary exploration in order to ascertain whether there was space under the floor of our room sufficient to dispose of the earth which we should have to remove in our operations. We had reasonable hopes that this would be so, for the Model School was built on a slope, and our room was towards the downhill end of the building. Before cutting through the floor we examined the planks, which were well laid and dovetailed, and, to our satisfaction, found a trap-door, but not one with hinges. Removing the screws that held it in place, we raised it and descended into the regions below.

As three of us were doomed to occupy this earthy chamber for as many weeks, I shall here give a brief description of it. The floor was about two and a half feet above the ground, and the space below, corresponding to that of the floor above, was divided into five narrow compartments by four transverse stone walls, on which the cross-beams that carried the flooring were laid. Each chamber was about eighteen feet in length and three and a half in breadth, and in each of the walls was a man-hole. A certain amount of air came into this damp space through small ventilators under the verandah, but the atmosphere was close, and one could not see except with the aid of artificial light.

Our scheme was, by working in three reliefs as far as possible continuously, to sink a shaft some twelve feet deep by five in length and three in width, from the bottom of which a tunnel would be driven for about a hundred feet under the street, which was not being used by wheeled traffic and would not have to bear a heavy weight. The farther end of the tunnel would reach the surface in the kitchen-garden of a house which faced the school, where it could be easily masked until dark, when we would emerge and make our way out of the town.

For digging purposes we used at first screwdrivers in order



to get through some three feet of caked earth, which was almost as hard as concrete. Soon after reaching the soft earth below water was struck, and do what we would, no efforts could get rid of it, and work had to cease.

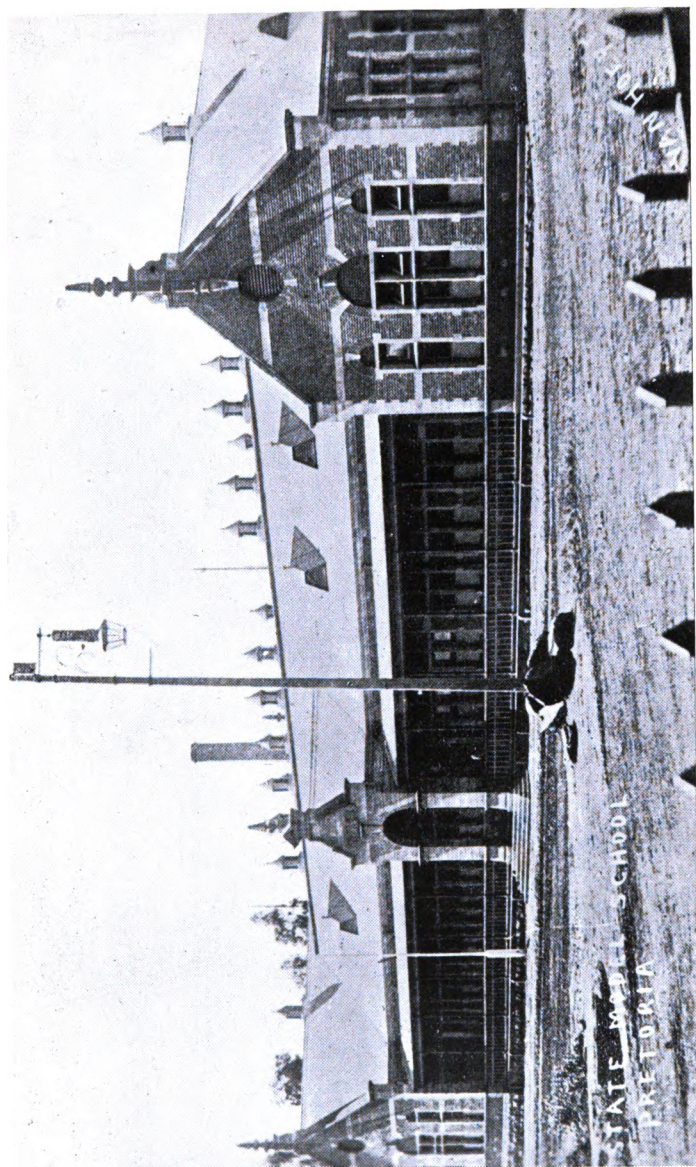
The failure of this plan, which had seemed to promise such good results, was disappointing, but I did not lose hope. Some lines of Sir Walter Scott kept constantly recurring to me :—

“ Patience waits the destined day ;  
Strength can clear the cumber'd way ; ”

and the word “ impossible ” was not to be thought of.

Meantime a constant watch was kept on the sentries to see if they showed any signs of diminished vigilance ; and Brockie gave me some instruction in the Kaffir language, several sentences of which I committed to memory.

Christmas Day, when it was hoped that the sentries might be less alert, passed like other days, and we continued to live on hope, for nothing more tangible offered itself.



State Model School, Pretoria.

[To face p. 160.]



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE LAST AND SUCCESSFUL PLAN.

BEFORE Churchill made his moonlight flitting from Pretoria he had urged me to organise a rising of the prisoners, with the idea of breaking out and seizing the town. The idea, which accorded with his genius, required that the prisoners in the Model School should first secure the rifles of the guard, then capture President Kruger, after which they would proceed to the locality where the rank and file were confined and release them. This effected, a train would be commandeered and we would proceed to Delagoa Bay. To my mind, blessed with less imagination than his, the idea savoured of the fantastic, and I flatly refused to have anything to do with it, for the necessary requisite—a bold and determined leader who would be senior to all the prisoners—was not forthcoming. Moreover, from the point of view of arms for the considerable numbers involved, and the risk of retaliatory measures should the plan fail, there were obvious objections. The matter was accordingly dropped.

At this time the inhabitants of Pretoria took considerable interest in us and were in the habit on Sunday afternoons of passing and repassing our place of retreat on the side of the street farthest from us. Some displayed unmistakable evidences of sympathy, while others looked as if they would gladly have had a shot at us through the railings. I recall one quite pretty girl who used frequently to form one of the sightseers and who from perfect safety, at a distance of twenty yards or so, cast amorous glances at a good-looking young lieutenant, to the exclusion of the rest of us. I heard that after Lord Roberts reached the capital of the Transvaal and the officer in question regained his freedom he managed to meet the pretty young girl, but history does not relate how the romance ended.

Meantime rumours, that owing to the increasing number of prisoners we were to be moved to another locality, arrived,

and one wondered if the change would make escape more difficult; and it was decided that further postponement of plans was inadvisable and that something must be done, and that speedily.

I therefore tried, through an officer who was sick in the hospital contiguous to the school, to induce the English electrician who was in charge of the lighting of the town to throw the whole place one night into darkness, during which we might climb out of the backyard. He, however, proved to have given his parole that he would do nothing of a hostile nature on pain of forfeiting his livelihood, so it was clear that the extinction of any lights must rest with us and not be that of an extraneous agency.

This brings me to the plot in which four conspirators would be engaged, by which it was hoped to pass unseen through the line of sentries, surmount the corrugated-iron paling round the school-yard, and eventually reach the outskirts of the town. Thereafter the plan would conform with earlier ideas.

The project was not without risks, for we should run the chance of being seen and shot at at short range, but I had reached a stage when I was feeling desperate. The sentries, through the sudden and unexpected extinction of the bright arc-lights, might not see clearly for a few seconds, and during that brief space we must hope to make sufficient headway to escape their lethal efforts.

Once a week there seemed to be a kind of dog-watch arrangement, for the sentries, instead of being relieved as usual at eight o'clock, continued their tour of duty till midnight. We must, therefore, give preference to that night, for it seemed reasonable to suppose that after so long a spell of duty their vigilance might be somewhat relaxed.

But the key to the whole problem was to succeed in cutting the electric-light wires, and two possible means of doing so presented themselves—one, where they passed into the electrometer on the wall close to the front door of the building, the other by penetrating the loft and attacking them where they entered the roof. The first method was vetoed, for the wires at this spot were extremely thick, and this place was thronged by persons going in and out of the doorway. The loft must therefore be invaded, and that was no simple matter.

To reach that place the only way would be to remove

a heavy ladder from the gymnasium and by its assistance climb through a trap-door in the ceiling of the main passage. But as a permanent route it was radically bad. In order to succeed in escaping it was essential to keep our plan secret, and this would be impossible unless some other means of reaching the loft could be devised. At length a simple means occurred to me.

The roof of the gymnasium, which was of wood, had sloping sides, and by climbing to the top of one of the upright ladders a trap-door might be cut and then we should have easy access to the wires. Forthwith I made a rough saw out of a table knife, the trap-door was cut, and cross-battens were screwed to it to keep it from falling out. In order to facilitate climbing over the iron paling we prepared three plank ladders with padded ends, and these were painted with boot blacking to render them inconspicuous.

Another important matter was that of food. As we intended to make for Mafeking we expected to be several days, if not weeks, on the road, and sufficient provisions of a non-bulky nature must be carried. We double-lined our waistcoats, making numerous pockets therein, each of which would hold one or two packets of chocolate. Should we have to run for it we should be carrying weight where it would least be felt.

All was now ready, a soldier servant had been engaged to cut the wires and had been instructed during a preliminary visit to the loft exactly what he was to do.

Some days of anxiety passed, and the afternoon of the 23rd February came. The weather was dull and threatening, and as evening approached a fine drizzle began and the wind whistled through the trees. The sky was covered with inky-black clouds, and the ground being saturated might be expected to deaden the sound of our feet as we crossed the gravel-covered yard. Fortune seemed to smile on us, for the sentries were one less in number than usual, the absentee being the very one close to whom we should have to pass.

At nine o'clock the four conspirators assembled on the verandah, ready to creep with stealthy steps to the appointed place of exit. I gave the arranged signal for the wires to be cut, and in a few moments the lights in the school and back-yard went out. But before we had time to reach the barrier of wire-netting close to the verandah the lights shone again.

Our accomplice had partly severed the wires, receiving a shock in doing so, and he now declined to have anything further to do with our project. This was, as it turned out, as well, for the German police inspector shortly arrived, and escape that night was out of the question.

Two days passed, and on the afternoon of the 26th the electric lights in the yard which, together with those in the adjacent streets, were turned on some time before sunset, suddenly went out. To me it was plain what had happened, though Brockie insisted that the extinction was caused by a football striking the wires which ran across the backyard. I however felt certain that those in the roof of the building, having been only partially cut on the night of the 23rd, had fused, and soon we knew that such was the case.

During the dinner-hour an order was passed round which stated that we were not to walk about the exterior of the school that evening, although we might cross the backyard for necessary purposes, and as the building was in darkness candles were issued.

We were now faced with the urgent question as to what was to be done, for the sentries had been doubled, a bonfire lighted in the yard, and a cordon of Kaffirs was said to have been placed farther afield. According to rumour the move to new quarters would take place in two days' time, and escape after the change would, owing to the nature of the structure, be more difficult. The trap-door in the ceiling of the room would certainly be discovered on the morrow, and the officers who ran the food office there would be blamed. We should have to acknowledge that we were the culprits, and that would be followed by imprisonment and no chance of escape.

The situation was grave, and when ten o'clock came no solution had suggested itself. Outside there was nothing to be done in face of the obstacles already enumerated, and after an inspection of the backyard and premises Le Mesurier, Brockie, and I were seated in our room in earnest confabulation. I was convinced that there must be some way out of the impasse if we could only hit on it, and I urged my companions to think as hard as they could how to solve the problem. All of a sudden an idea struck me, and half-jokingly I gave expression to it. "Supposing," I said, "we were to hide under the floor, do you think that the Boers would suspect what had

become of us, considering the precautions they have taken outside the school?" The words had no sooner left my lips than my two companions ejaculated, "Of course they wouldn't," but I told them that once under the floor we would have to remain there till a chance came to escape or the British arrived in Pretoria.

That did not seem to worry them, and, our decision having been taken, preparations for going below the floor began. With some difficulty the trap-door was forced open, for it had got tightly jammed, and a few necessary articles were collected. While this was in progress I went round the room and told the occupants what we were about to do, and they readily consented to preserve secret our hiding-place.

What we three hoped was that the Boers would think that we had taken advantage of the darkness, bribed a sentry, and so made off. That, as we knew before long, was their conclusion. We had planned the escape in the only way possible.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### HIDDEN IN THE SCHOOL.

WE now descended to the scene of our earlier and futile activities, and settled to occupy the compartment next to the outer wall, where the ventilators below the verandah would make the air fresher than in the other chambers and where we should not be in pitch darkness throughout the day. Each of us had taken with him one blanket, for to have removed more bedding, much as we were tempted to do, might have aroused suspicion that we had not left the building. The result of this unavoidable self-denial was that it took a day or two for us to get accustomed to lying on the hard ground.

About 5.30 next morning, after passing a restless, uncomfortable night, daylight began to percolate through the ventilators—a day which for us meant discovery or prospects of eventual escape—but escape was further off than we imagined, and ere we shook the dust of Pretoria from our feet we had to undergo what it makes me shudder to recall.

The minutes passed and soon footsteps were audible overhead, which indicated that the Boer commandant was making his morning rounds and was counting the heads in bed. In imagination one pictured what was happening. He had arrived at one of the vacant beds and was staring at it in amazement. No dummy figure had this time been prepared, nor was there a living object where one should have been. His tread was heard again, and twice more it ceased as he stopped where two more blanks were seen. Then came the sound of voices. He was inquiring from some drowsy mortal where the usual occupants of the beds were. The conversation was brief, for the inquirer had no claim to popularity among the prisoners; and perhaps it is as well that I cannot record here what was said. Whatever its nature, the next thing heard was the sound of retreating footsteps and we knew that our absence was at

least suspected, which made us wonder what would happen before long.

The hours rolled on, and at 9.45 I heard a voice, that of the senior British officer, bidding everyone go into the back-yard. A search was about to be made, and soon the tramp of feet was audible overhead. Between us and a posse of detectives and armed police there was nothing but a couple of inches of deal, but it would serve our purpose and screen what lay crouched below it. The searchers moved about the room looking under the beds, and finding there "no matter what, it was not that they sought." Soon the search came to an end and we were able again to breathe freely.

An hour after this somewhat trying experience the school seemed to have resumed its normal routine, but no news from the upper region reached us. Later in the day we heard that the houses in the vicinity had been searched unavailingly, and that it was supposed that we were on the way to Mafeking. The trap-door, of which there was one in each room, had been overlooked, and suspicion as to our whereabouts was directed anywhere rather than to the place where we actually were.

When we first went to ground we had to rely on such food as Frankland and his assistants could abstract during meals or save from their own limited rations, but the quantity of bread allowed the prisoners by the Boers was not abundant and, though our wants were not great, the question of our daily supply was causing concern. It had, too, been assumed somewhat hastily that our escape would lead the Boers to conclude that it was desirable without delay to move the prisoners to more secure quarters; but no sign of a fulfilment of such an intention manifested itself, and it was decided to take into our confidence one of our fellow prisoners, Captain Martin of the 60th Rifles, who was in charge of the commissariat. Through his agency we soon began to live in plenty, though our sedentary life threw no strain on his efforts to satisfy our requirements.

At this point I may mention that I have sometimes been asked questions regarding our sanitary arrangements while we were in hiding, and I may as well now disclose them; and in doing so I feel less squeamish than I would have done half a century ago, as people in general have grown to be more sensible in certain things which used to be regarded as

unmentionable. The fact is that where we lay under the floor there were some six inches of sand, and I leave the rest to the imagination of my readers, who will appreciate what a boon this substance—a precaution against white ants—proved to be. After a day or two we broke through the stone wall between us and the next room, where sand also was to be found, and this made matters more satisfactory for us.

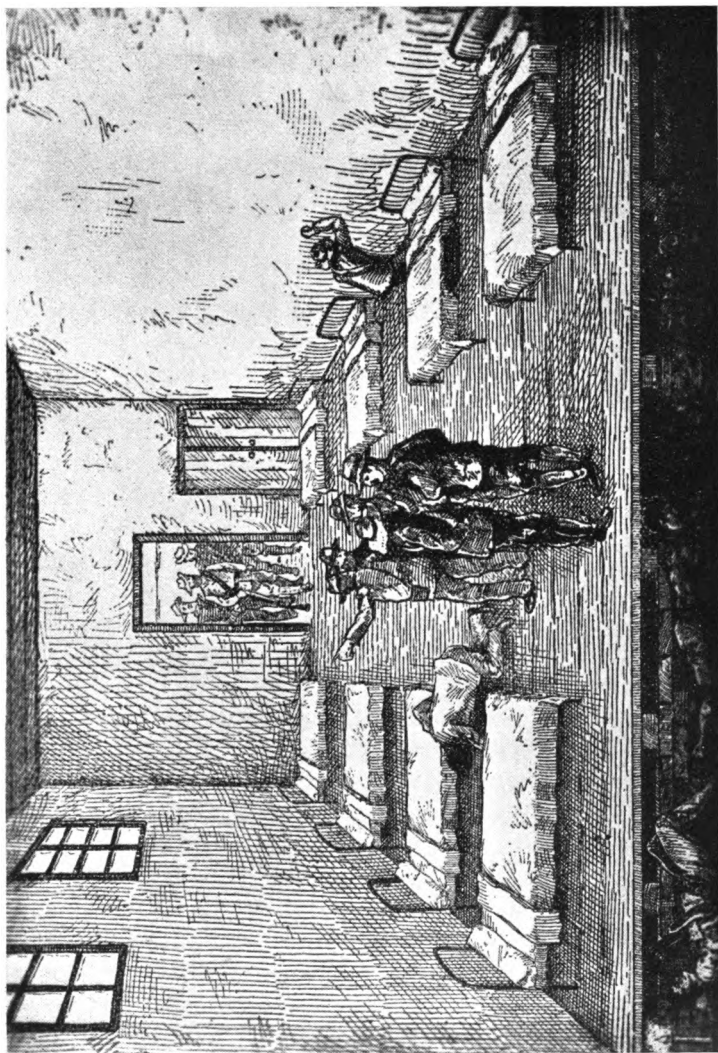
The day after our supposed flight an account appeared in a local newspaper which stated that a Kaffir had found the remains of a roast fowl on the Mafeking road, a discovery which would help to maintain the supposition that we had gone in that direction, and soon after nothing more was heard of us.

Meanwhile we below ground suffered a good deal from lack of fresh air, the constrained position in which we had constantly to remain, and having, when we moved in the dark, to creep about on hands and knees and suffer from bumps against beams and partition walls.

How we passed our time will not take long to tell. We generally tried to make the night last till 10 A.M., then had a snack. Lunch was at 1 P.M., and, that finished, reading and smoking followed; and at seven a cup of cocoa and bed. Not an exciting way of passing the twenty-four hours, but the only way.

Six uneventful days went by, and though at first we had great hopes of a move these grew less and less daily. We thought that a week would be as much as we could endure of the kind of existence we were leading, but that became prolonged to a fortnight, and we hardened ourselves to hold out still longer. The sole consolation we derived from our rather forlorn situation was that each day that passed would give us a longer start when the time came to emerge from the school, for the officials had no idea that we were still in Pretoria and our having escaped had become ancient history. They may sometimes have wondered how so long a time had elapsed since our disappearance and our not being heard of at some place whence news of our arrival would have been announced.

On the 8th March we heard that no move was likely to take place. Things were getting desperate, and even Mark



“ The Tramp of Arméd Men.”

[To face p. 168.]



Tapley would scarce have felt cheerful in the circumstances. Our friends above, who sympathised with our plight, urged us, with the best intentions, to come up and suggested that we might hide in the loft; but I set my face against any change of quarters as some of the guard understood English and they would be sure to get a hint that we were hidden in the school. We hardened our hearts again and decided to remain where we were until the prisoners were exchanged or the campaign came to an end.

For the sake of exercise and distraction we felt we must do something, so decided to break through to the end room of the building, and thence dig a shallow tunnel into the hospital grounds. This, well shored-up with timber, which we could procure somehow, and dug above danger of water, would not take long to make, as its length would not be great and work could be carried out on it night and day.

Forthwith we began operations and dug much of the twenty-four hours, our only implements being a skewer and a bayonet. We made good progress and felt all the better for the exercise; and four days after we had started some encouraging news arrived. It was in a pencilled note and read as follows: "We move to-morrow after breakfast. Patience has carried the day. You deserve your luck."

We had been seventeen days and nights below and had still some twenty-four hours to pass in our restricted dwelling. The risk, however, of discovery from internal causes was not yet over. Knowing that several officers who were unaware that we were hidden had been digging, we felt that they might conceal themselves as we had done, thinking to escape when the move took place. I thereupon wrote to the senior British officer and explained the position, and he came to the rescue in the way I hoped.

We had at one time decided to make for Mafeking, but thinking that after the period of inaction we had undergone the long walk would be too much for us, we settled to go to Delagoa Bay, as on that route we might get a train for part of the distance. In December, before Churchill's escape, I had got temporary possession from the library of a guide-book of the railway line to Lorenzo Marques and had committed to memory, in order, the thirty or forty stations on that route, the height of each above sea-level and its distance from Pretoria,

so that I felt somewhat familiar with the country east of the capital of the Transvaal.

The 16th March dawned—a day that will live long in the memory of myself and my two companions—both, alas! no more. By 7 A.M. we had word that no one had ruined our hopes by hiding; and at eight Frankland's voice was heard saying, "All's well. Good-bye," and soon the bustle of moving reached our ears.

By noon the baggage and servants, the officers having gone earlier, had departed, and for a time all was unwontedly still. Then a number of policemen—we imagined—could be heard overhead in fits of laughter at the caricatures of President Kruger and others with which Frankland had adorned the walls of the room. From then onwards quiet reigned again to our relief, evidence that the building would not be occupied that night. The day had been fine and sunny, and it would not be dark before half-past six and there would be a full moon to light us on the road to freedom.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### ON THE VELDT.

ALL above being quiet and the building apparently deserted, Brockie was deputed to make sure that no caretaker had been left in charge. The trap-door was pushed up and he crept into the room above, from which all furniture had been removed, and shortly reported that all was clear. Thereupon Le Mesurier and I followed, closing the exit after us and making our way to the back door, of which I had obtained a key and which opened on to the backyard. There we paused for a moment to make sure that no one was about, and then vaulted over the iron railings into the street at a point near where the police tents had been.

Crossing the road and turning to the left we tramped along in a slouching attitude, such as seemed appropriate to Boers, and walked towards the outskirts of the town. Several men, who we imagined were special constables, were passed, but little or no notice was taken of us, and soon we arrived at a level-crossing on the Delagoa railway. We halted here for a moment to consider whether it would be wiser to move across country rather than follow the iron road, and decided against the former. In spite of the full moon there would be the chance of losing our way unless we kept to a well-marked route. All that had to be done now was to keep a sharp lookout for bridge-guards and patrols, who, we understood, had orders to fire at anyone walking along the track at night.

We had not gone far when we had experience of such dangers, for, partly hidden by a bush, we almost walked into a watcher on a bridge, who must have been asleep or he could hardly have failed to hear or see us. We dropped to the ground like stones, lay absolutely still for some seconds, and then crawled down the embankment and by-passed him.

All around us dogs in the neighbouring farms were baying



loudly at the moon, and occasional shouts from afar made us hasten on our way. Keeping at some distance from the railway and moving over the veldt we came near the first station west of Pretoria and distant, as I knew by my *memoria technica*, thirteen miles. Shortly before we had got so far Le Mesurier had the ill-luck to sprain his ankle, which delayed our progress, but the time for a halt had arrived and he managed to get as far as a deep ditch near a sluggish river into which we crept. The mosquitoes drove us nearly mad that night, but when the sun appeared they ceased to pay us their disagreeable attentions, so we remained where we were. During the day we ate a little chocolate and some meat lozenges; but as regards water we were as badly off as Tantalus, for the river a few yards distant could not be safely approached. Someone seemed to be fishing in it close to us—an Englishman we thought, for he whistled, one after another, many tunes that were familiar to us. His *repertoire* was somewhat out of date and included, amongst others, "Oh! What a Surprise! Two Lovely Black Eyes," "Two Little Girls in Blue," and "After the Ball is Over."

Time passes slowly when one has nothing better to do all day than brush off flies, and we regretted that a pack of cards had not been included in our baggage, for then we might have called the "Demon" to our aid—for while hidden under the floor Le Mesurier had shown me the patience game known as "Demon," which had helped to kill many wearisome hours.

A few trains steamed past up and down the line—these and the occasional horn of the Hatherley distillery hard by alone serving to break the monotony. Towards evening I sent Brockie, who professed some skill in scouting, armed with Le Mesurier's binoculars, to seek a ford over the river, and after a time he returned, bringing the satisfactory news that there was one between us and the little station of Eerste Fabriken; and when twilight came we sallied forth and reached a road. But roads in the Transvaal are not as other roads. They consist, or did so at the time of my escape, of nothing but deeply indented wheel tracks left by the clumsy, ponderous transport of the country—the ox-wagon. As the Boers in wet weather leave the main track where it has become swampy and mark out a line for themselves, the natural consequence is that in course of time the vicinity of the original

highway becomes nothing but a maze of tracks, and to find one's way in the dark in an unknown district is wellnigh impossible. To-night we were to have this experience, but after wandering about the veldt for some time we had the good fortune to strike the railway. Both my companions were by this time tired and footsore, but I, having taken care to keep fit at the school and being a bit of a pedestrian, felt quite fresh and ready to go much farther.

Where we had now arrived there lay ahead a range of hills, in which was a *poort* or gap through which the line passed, and on the name-board of the little station, merely a platform, we read "Pienaars Poort." As we drew nearer the defile the sound of running water could be heard, and once well within the *poort* we sat down to take stock of things and refresh. Road, river, and railway were crowded into the pass, which at its widest was about two hundred yards broad ; and on either side the hills, tenanted by chattering baboons, rose steep and bare. The ground before us ascended towards the farther end of the defile, the railway gradient being steep, and one felt instinctively that here would be a bad place in which to encounter a patrol. The only way of escape would be backwards or up the steep hills on either side.

Brand's Essence and whisky, of which we had a small medicine bottle full, worked wonders on my weary companions and, invigorated, we started off, imbued with the intention of reaching Elands River station, which was twenty-nine miles from Pretoria. I led along the railway line. On our left, a stone's throw distant, flowed the river, its surface shining like a mirror under the light of the moon. Before us ran the double rails, looking like bars of silver, and beyond them, on the right, the road. As we trod softly and looked ahead as far as we could see, some tents appeared on the right of the railway, pitched close under the hill. I turned to Brockie, who was immediately following me, and asked his opinion. "Only a Kaffir kraal," he replied, so we pressed on. A few paces farther and the stillness of the night was broken by the angry barking of a dog. I stopped at once ; immediate action was imperative, and we dropped down into the long, rushy grass that filled the space betwixt the river and the railway. The dog continued barking—he had evidently seen us. Presently voices became audible, one of them bidding

the cur to be silent, but he paid no attention and other dogs followed suit.

After lying for some minutes in the grass, for we did not think it wise to move so long as the dogs were on the alert, we heard from their voices that some persons were coming in our direction. Evidently a patrol was on its way to clear up the situation. A whispered conference was held. It was decided to retreat, and we dragged ourselves snake-like and diagonally back towards the river. Reaching a broad ditch full of water Le Mesurier came alongside me and asked me if I had seen Brockie, who had been following him. Being in front I had not, so we waited a few moments, but, seeing no signs of him and as the enemy was drawing near, we crossed the obstacle and found ourselves at the edge of the stream. Again we paused and the searchers came clearly in view, following the track which we had made through the rushes. One of them was walking with his rifle at the trail and bent double, and I thought he was our missing companion, but I soon saw that I was mistaken.

At this moment many things rushed through my mind, as sometimes happens at a crisis, and one more especially. Shortly before leaving Pretoria I had been reading a friend of my youth, 'Tales of a Grandfather,' and I now recalled how King Robert the Bruce, when pursued by John of Lorn's bloodhounds, had waded down a river and so destroyed the scent. My mind was instantly made up. The crisis had come ; to stay where we were would mean discovery and capture, so I whispered to Le Mesurier to follow me silently and take care not to splash. Thereupon I transferred the manuscript map, which I had drawn before leaving the school, from a pocket to the lining of my hat, and the next moment I dropped into the river, which was out of my depth, and my companion joined me. Holding on to the roots of the rushes that lined the bank we paused for a few seconds, and as the searchers drew nearer carefully pulled ourselves some way down-stream and paused again. The Boers and their dogs showed no signs of coming our way, so we continued our downward course and ultimately swam across and climbed on to the far bank.

We had been some time in the water, which seemed intensely cold, and our teeth were chattering so that we could hardly speak. Next we climbed up the hill and eventually descended

at a point beyond where the Boer tents on the other side of the stream were pitched.

While we were scrambling along the hillside we had kept our eyes on the low ground, where all seemed quiet, and not a sign of Brockie was to be seen; and at the same time we looked out for some place where we could hide till next we pursued our journey. Several patches of bracken had been noticed and into one of them we crawled, and in spite of being saturated managed to sleep. When morning came I was so stiff and rheumatic that I could scarcely move, and Le Mesurier, though a much younger man, was little better. The absence of our colonial companion gave me no anxiety, for I placed little trust in him, he having misled us on more than one occasion.

Where we lay was in full view from the high ground, but the spot which we had chosen, if we kept still, was good enough, and only a few Kaffirs came near during the day. I do not remember any trains passing in either direction, but it was a Sunday and none might be running. As we lay drying in the sun our thoughts went back to the Model School and we wondered where our accomplices would think we were. How light-hearted we felt to be free again and on our way back to the front! All that was now necessary was care and caution. These we had become accustomed to exercise when we were under the floor, and we were determined not to leave anything to chance or spare any trouble to ensure our ultimate freedom.

In addition to the ordinary risks of being captured or shot, for, being dressed in plain clothes, some truculent Boer might make that an excuse to put a bullet through us, there were others which now suggested themselves. There was the possibility that the trap-door which we had not closed very neatly might have been noticed and that Brockie might outstrip us, reach Lorenzo Marques, and, forgetting that we were still behind him, talk in an indiscreet manner. The latter supposition was not devoid of foundation, as will later appear.

The hour had now come round to resume our journey and, taking the moon as our guide, we hoped to strike the railway and reach Elands River station. After going some distance I found to my dismay that I had left at our last

hiding-place my waist-belt, inside which were £18. The risk of returning to search for it and the improbability of being able to find the spot where it had been left were too great, so I decided to cut the loss.

It seemed a long time till we struck the railway, and when we did so the experience of two nights of guards and patrols foolishly led us to mistrust that route and we wandered far out of our course. Towards dawn, when we were thinking of where we could hide when daylight came, we saw what we supposed was the station, but there was no river as betokened its name, only a tiny trickling stream which would, however, suffice for our needs. Hard by a cock was crowing, from which it was certain that we were near some dwelling, and, seeing a small clump of blue-gum trees and both of us feeling tired, we made for it and threw ourselves on the ground, hoping to get a sleep before the mosquitoes found us.

I was soon in the land of Nod, but awoke startled when Le Mesurier whispered in my ear that he thought we were discovered. My heart stood still, for there seemed no escape from where we lay; but I could get nothing further from him so lay still, hoping for the best. He had, it appeared later, been dreaming and the alarm proved to be false; but there was more excitement to come. A heavy shower of rain now fell, and after it had ceased footsteps were heard coming along a path not more than six feet from where we lay. The situation was distinctly trying, and neither of us moved an inch lest we should be seen. Then a young Boer showed himself and stopped almost beside where we lay hid, and a dog with him began growling. How this animal did not discover us will always remain a mystery to me, but perhaps the heavy rain, which helped to hide our tracks in the grass, may have spoiled the scent.

All day long Kaffirs worked near us, but we remained unnoticed, and when darkness came we made for the railway, thinking to arrive at a steep gradient where we could board a train. Some months later when I was on my way, invalided, to Pretoria, I passed Elands River station and noticed the clump of blue-gums, and was amazed to see that it was close to a number of cottages, so we had had a narrow escape of discovery.

When we joined the railway we lay down at a suitable





Pienaars Poort.



In the Kaffirs' Hut.

[To face p. 177.]

spot in company, as usual, with numerous mosquitoes, but no train came, and we waited till it was nearly light and the search for a hiding-place was necessary. Water was our principal need, and this we had the good luck to find in a spring near a platelayer's cottage which was close to the line, and, after quenching our thirst and filling the medicine bottle which had held whisky, we found what is known as the domain of an ant-bear or *vark*. This consisted of a ditch which led to the burrow of that animal, and here in a grilling sun we lay all that day.

The next few days, though we several times nearly walked into people on the veldt, brought no adventures worth recording, so I pass on to the evening when we arrived at a siding of the railway in which was a coal-laden train. Nearby was a stone-built hut, which we entered after some hesitation, and within we found half a dozen Kaffirs squatting round a cauldron having their evening meal. Signifying our desire to share it, for we were by this time on the verge of starvation, the vessel was tilted towards us and we helped ourselves. Mainly by signs and helped by the few words of the Kaffir language which Le Mesurier knew, it was indicated that we wanted to get to the coast in a coal train; but having made little way in our inquiries and having discovered that an Englishman lived not far off at a coal mine, one of the darkies conducted us along the siding, and at length we came to a row of one-storeyed houses and stopped opposite one of them, which was that of the mine manager. After some talk with him he took us to another mine close by, where we were hidden in a barn and slept peacefully, except for numerous rats who seemed to take exception to the invaders. Next day our hosts saw that we had as much as we could eat, and we received a visit from a certain Dr Gillespie, who hailed from another mine at a distance. He had come to glean such news of the progress of the war as was forthcoming from friends who had hidden us and, hearing of our presence, expressed a wish to see us. From him we learned that he had with others been instrumental in getting Churchill over the border, and he stated that if we would entrust ourselves to him we might consider ourselves as being in safety. He added that at the mine where we were a number of Englishmen were employed and it would be unsafe for us to stay there as someone was sure to talk.



He proposed to take us at night to the Transvaal and Delagoa Bay colliery—where Churchill had been hidden—and there plans would be evolved to pass us over the Portuguese border.

During the day I saw in a newspaper, the first I had read since leaving Pretoria, with profound regret the death of Sir William Lockhart, my late chief, who had died of fever while making a tour in Burma.

The same day, when it was sufficiently dark, Dr Gillespie appeared with his cape-cart and we were driven seventeen miles to the mine about which he had told us. Here we were handed over to the manager, Mr Howard, who hid us for a week in his house while arrangements were being made to transfer us to neutral territory.

Howard told us how Churchill, on the night of his exit from the school, had succeeded with some difficulty in climbing into a truck on the 11.10 train while it was in motion. Travelling all night, he had jumped out towards morning, and following a path had arrived at his, the manager's, house. Here he had been hidden in the mine for some days, and then in one of seven trucks, laden with bales of wool, had travelled to Lorenzo Marques. Suspicion that something as well as wool had been in one of the trucks had been aroused through greasy finger-marks on the bales; and as this fact came to the knowledge of the Boers the sender of the trucks fell under suspicion and was questioned on the matter. In consequence, at the mine it was thought wiser that a truck or wagon belonging to some other person who had no connection with anyone there should be used for our further journey; so one of the staff drove to Middelburg to see if on a train which was about to proceed to the coast there was no vehicle in which we could be hidden.

When the messenger returned from his search he reported that he had not been successful, but he brought the news that Brockie had arrived and had gone to a store to try to get work. He had been passed on to another store where there was an Englishman who knew him and who had procured a passport for him as far as Kaapmuiden, forty-six miles from the border. After hearing this account of Brockie's movements my anxiety was renewed, for now that he was well ahead of us he might be indiscreet and jeopardise our chance of getting out of the country. Indeed, had I known

another fact which did not come to my knowledge till later I might have felt greater concern.

This fact was that, after we left Pretoria, a Zululand magistrate had been arrested and confined with the British officers with whom we had been prisoners, and while there had heard that we had been hidden under the floor of the school and had not really escaped for some weeks ; and this fact he mentioned to someone at Lorenzo Marques after his release. Moreover, he had happened to meet Brockie at a railway station on the way to the coast, and that talkative and boastful person had given him full details of our escape. The Boers thus became aware that we were still in the Transvaal, and it seemed probable that a keener lookout would be kept for us. It was fortunate that we were kept in ignorance of what I have just related or we might have felt tempted to get out of the country by some means other than by hiding in what was little better than a mouse-trap.

When we arrived at Howard's mine Le Mesurier was feeling ill and, unlike me who, after dark, used to take exercise with my host, never left the house. A few days passed, by which time everything had been got ready for our further journey. Elaborate arrangements were made for our food supply ; and at half-past four one morning we were consigned to a truck.

In order that the reader may better understand the kind of place we were to occupy for sixty-three hours, I will describe it as briefly as I can. The bales of wool, sixteen in number, were in size about five feet long by two and a half feet broad and about the same in depth. These were so arranged that a space, some three feet by seven, was left at one end of the truck, leading from which was a narrow tunnel into the piled-up bales, where we could hide if necessary. The end of the tunnel, which opened on to the space, was not covered and could easily be seen into.

Inside the truck we lay until ten o'clock, when Howard passed by and, asking us if we were all right, bade us good-bye. Not long after we were taken by a colliery engine to Whitbank station, and after some time were hooked on to the train for Lorenzo Marques.

The journey was uninteresting, for little of the country could be seen through a hole I cut in the tarpaulin cover ;

and late in the evening the train came to a halt at Waterval Boven. At this station the passengers put up at a diminutive hotel, but we, being contraband goods, passed a disturbed night in the truck, numerous mosquitoes being our companions.

Before arriving next afternoon at the last station in the Transvaal it was decided to jettison most of our stores and water in view of the possibility that the truck might be searched, though we had no reason to suppose that that would be done. That such a precaution, to which I have earlier referred, had been ordered by the Boer Government came to my knowledge through a copy of a telegram which fell into my hands after my return to England. This was as follows: "In continuation of telegram regarding escape of officers you are ordered to let no goods or passenger trains in which are goods pass before they have been immediately searched."

We were not yet out of the wood, though we only suspected the danger that was now so near, and we were full of hopes that we would find ourselves that day or the next in neutral territory.

Before reaching Komati Poort we retired into the tunnel in the bales and, being the longer and thinner, I entered first, feet leading, and by keeping on my side and squeezing myself I nearly reached the far end. Le Mesurier followed and with his coat covered his head and shoulders after arriving perhaps five feet from the entrance to our lair. We had retired into this uncomfortable region about 2.20 P.M., and when we found ourselves detached from the rest of the train we heard the chattering of Kaffirs just outside the truck. It was very warm and exceedingly uncomfortable, and I was glad to hear the train move off about three o'clock, as our fate would soon be decided one way or the other.

The idea possessed me that the Kaffirs had been placed where they were to guard the truck until such time as it could be searched, for that process seemed certain to take place. Indeed, I felt that it was known that there were stowaways within. I therefore prepared for the worst and drew from a pocket the bag containing a hundred sovereigns which Mr Howard had kindly given me for my cheque, intending therewith to bribe whoever came. I also tore out of my diary several pages which contained compromising matter and kept them in my hand.

A few minutes of suspense passed, and then a gruff voice was heard giving some order to the Kaffirs. The next moment a chill shot through me and my thoughts returned to the Model School. We heard the rattle of the links as the cords of the tarpaulin which were tied to them at our end of the truck were unloosened. The moments that followed defy description—so many thoughts were crowded into one's mind, thoughts of recapture, and ruin to all one's hopes of seeing more of the campaign. Soon the tarpaulin was lifted up and thrown back over the top of the truck. What happened we could only imagine, for we dared not move to look; but the daylight from above and from the end of the truck flooded in on us, and we felt that discovery was unavoidable. The search must have been perfunctory, though in our excited imaginations it seemed to last an age. Then the tarpaulin was returned to its place, the cords were made fast, and the Kaffirs resumed their chattering. The thought that crossed my mind was that we had been seen, but that the searcher, remarking to himself that there were two of us, had deemed it wiser to go for assistance. In this stifling hole—and there was very little air where I was—we lay till five o'clock. I could bear it no longer and my limbs were becoming cramped; so, catching hold of my companion's foot, I intimated my desire to shift to the open space. Shortly after the cause of the Kaffirs' chattering was explained. There was a stand-pipe at one side of the track and the natives were washing themselves when we were first put into the siding. On looking through the hole in the tarpaulin I saw that we were in the station, three lines distant from the platform, and soon several Boers with their women folk arrived and sat there till dark.

The next day would be Saturday and we hoped that we might not be left on the wrong side of the Komati River, for on Sunday trains might not be running. When morning came, however, a certain amount of shunting began, but for some time no engine came our way. Then at nine-thirty we felt the shaking caused by a locomotive moving on the same line of rails as was our truck. Then came a welcome bump, soon followed by a jerk, and we found ourselves being hauled forward and then backed into the station. Ten minutes later the train steamed off and some seconds after we were thunder-

ing over the bridge which spans the Komati River, and I saw the boundary stone which marks the Transvaal-Portuguese Frontier. We were free ! Of three of us who had been captured on the armoured train two were no longer in the hands of the Boers, and so far as I know, besides ourselves and Churchill, no one else escaped from Pretoria.

A minute later our train stopped at Ressano Garcia and our wagon was detached. After a time we disembarked and went into the refreshment room, as we had decided not to go as far as Lorenzo Marques till next day. We found that it was kept by two Englishmen, and we informed them who we were. This led to the production of a bottle of champagne, and before we went to bed my head had been put to a severe test, for we sampled most of the strong liquors in the bar.

The next morning passed peacefully, during which we bathed in the Komati River, keeping close to the bank, as there were numerous crocodiles in wait for the unwary. In the afternoon the train which was to take us to Delagoa Bay arrived. It was crowded with Uitlanders who had been forced to leave the Transvaal, some of whom began singing our National Anthem and others the "Marseillaise."

Evening was approaching as we ran into the terminus, which was thronged with people who had come to meet our fellow travellers. Quickly we made our way through them, for we had no baggage, and made for the Cardoza Hotel. What struck me on arrival as curious, for I did not know that the Zululand magistrate had preceded us, was that we seemed to be expected, and one of the British Consulate staff met us at the station. That evening I gave 'The Times' correspondent a brief account of our adventures, and later Reuter's representative called with a similar result. The latter told me that he had been instructed to send a résumé of my adventures, not exceeding two hundred words, but he had decided that the story was so interesting that he had despatched an account five times that length. 'The Times' correspondent said that his paper would have to pay the cable company £250 for the lengthy story which he had sent home.

We had just missed a steamer for Durban and had to remain at Lorenzo Marques for some days, but before we left Brockie arrived. He had, as already mentioned, been employed at Kaapmuiden, but when a general exodus of the Uitlanders



Captain Haldane and Lieutenant Le Mesurier  
on reaching Lorencø Marques.



Captain Haldane and Lieutenant Le Mesurier  
on the following day.

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was ordered he had no alternative but to take his departure. As he did not possess a passport beyond the place where he was he would have difficulty in accounting for his presence in the Transvaal, and were it discovered that he had been a prisoner-of-war he would find himself again at Pretoria. He therefore boarded the train which was carrying refugees to the coast and on arriving at Komati Poort, while the examination of passports was taking place, made his way to the frontier bridge. As he knew that the sale of spirits in the Transvaal during the war was forbidden, he promised the guard there that if they would allow him to go for a drink close by in Portuguese territory, where there were no restrictions, he would bring them back a bottle of whisky. This is the story he told me. The offer was accepted, he was allowed to pass, but neither he nor the whisky was seen again by the guard.

During the days we were at Lorenzo Marques, besides being photographed on arrival and the day after, when we had made a change in our garments and appearance, we spent a good deal of time on board the British cruisers which were anchored there. From the officers we received a warm welcome, and among them I found a kinsman, Commander Charles Dundas of Dundas.

On the 7th April we arrived at Durban, where I managed to elude the newspaper reporters, who had been warned that we might be expected. There I parted with my two companions and went to Pietermaritzburg.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### AT THE FRONT AGAIN.

BEFORE we left Howard's mine it was becoming evident that Le Mesurier, strongly built as he was, was suffering from the effects of exposure, lack of food, and bad water, which had been experienced from the night we turned our backs on Pretoria. No sooner was Natal reached than he fell dangerously ill with enteric fever, which led to his being invalided to England. Brockie, on the other hand, became recruiting officer at Johannesburg, having suffered not at all during our adventures. As regards myself, a few days after reaching Pietermaritzburg I was obliged to go to hospital, where for some three weeks I was subject to attacks of malarial fever, thanks to the mosquitoes which had molested us in our travels over the veldt. Between these attacks I felt well enough, and visitors urged me to write an account of our escape while it was fresh in my mind. This I set about doing, and chapter after chapter was posted home to my eldest sister, who succeeded in planting them on a receptive publisher. The success, as proved to be the case, of my first literary effort, surprised no one more than the author.

By the 13th May I had sufficiently recovered to allow of my leaving for Ladysmith, and early next morning on the way there the train passed the débris of what had carried me in that direction six months earlier, and I noticed at least one hole in our armoured wagon and wondered how any of us had survived.

At Ladysmith I found my regiment camped outside the town, whence General Buller had marched after the relief of the place. I was to learn later from his telegrams to Lord Roberts, which I saw in the War Office, that he had at first displayed considerable keenness to follow up the retreating Boers. When, however, it came to the point of engaging them his heart must have failed him, for further telegrams to

the Commander-in-Chief laid stress on the risk of doing so, in view of the considerable numbers with which he would have to deal. At length Lord Roberts, despairing of receiving any help from his subordinate on that side of the theatre of war, ceased to encourage him in a course which he had not himself originally proposed, but which suited well his plan of campaign.

For some time after I rejoined the regiment it remained at Ladysmith, and while there my turns for outpost duty used to come. One night I spent on Wagon Hill, the scene of the attempt made by the Boers to rush the place. There my regiment had had numerous casualties, and I lost one of my oldest friends. Some of my brother officers who had shared in that fateful day were outspoken in their opinions of the danger that had been incurred through the fact that the defences of the section of the perimeter which they held had been neglected. They stated, I know not with what justification, that the officer who was responsible for the safety of that portion of the front had scorned making trenches or sangars, and that such as there were were placed so that they offered no field of fire. It was said that in support of his action, or lack of it, he had quoted the Duke of Wellington as an authority for the statement that British troops fought best when not placed behind earthworks. A little more knowledge of the campaign in Spain might have modified his erroneous opinion and saved the lives of many gallant officers and men, besides diminishing the risk that was run on the 6th January 1900 of losing Ladysmith.

It may not be generally known that on the night after the battle of Fuentes de Onoro, where lack of defensive measures had nearly caused a defeat, Wellington, recognising that fact, ordered that fieldworks were to be thrown up along the whole new position—that is to say, trenches for the infantry and earthworks to cover six batteries, and, further, that abattis was to be placed across the bed of the Turones River.

It is true that at Waterloo little or no entrenching was done, probably because the polygot force which composed the Duke's army had fallen back after fighting a rear-guard action during which they had been drenched to the skin, and also because his system of tactics involved a return to the offensive at some period of the action.

The troops having recovered from their hardships during the siege were at length pronounced fit to march north in the footsteps of Buller's force in order to share in the quest of the elusive enemy, and eventually we settled for some weeks at Newcastle, my company being sent to occupy a hill at a little distance from the town. While there General Walter Kitchener paid me a visit, during which he told me how distressed he had been when, as already mentioned, he heard that we had been despatched, in his opinion to our death, in the armoured train. I told him how I felt, that my career in the Army was compromised by having been taken prisoner, and how important it was that I should get an opportunity of redeeming the past. He promised that so far as lay in his power he would help in my aspirations. He was, unfortunately, very deaf, and one day later on, when he came to my front and walked along the outpost line, the Boers from a distance were shooting at the sentries or at anyone whom they could see. A bullet grazed one of his leather gaiters, on which he turned to me and said, "Haldane, are they shooting at us?" I replied, "Yes, sir; and I don't think you ought to be here!" Had he not been deaf he must have heard the crack of the bullets; and I have sometimes since thought that the affliction of deafness might not, in certain circumstances, be counted a disadvantage to a soldier.

About this time Lord Roberts was understood to be in course of moving towards the Eastern Transvaal in order to clear that region from a force under General Botha, which had placed itself astride the Delagoa Bay railway. Buller, who was to co-operate, had orders to move on Amersfoort. On the way there we had a sharp little engagement at a place called Rooi Kopjes, where we lost a few men, after which we camped for some days at Meerzicht. While there I realised the necessity for attention being paid by our Army to the question of salvage, which was entirely neglected and regarding which I shall have more to say later on. Now that we were on the high veldt and at a distance from the railway it had become difficult to replace articles of equipment which, through carelessness, the men were continually losing. If one's company was deficient of some articles it sufficed to visit a deserted camp in order to replace them, which I often did.

It was at Meerzicht, too, that one day I ran some risk of

being shot or captured. General Howard, under whose command was the brigade in which my regiment was, sent for me and directed me to examine a valley which lay at some distance from where we were camped, to ascertain if there was water in what, on the map, was marked as a stream, as he was expecting reinforcements and the supply on the spot was insufficient. Why he did not employ one of his own staff I did not inquire, but we had known each other before we met in South Africa. He said that, in case there were any Boers about, I would be covered by the guns of a battery, the commander of which had been warned to keep a sharp lookout. Off I started on foot, as I did not possess a horse and was not offered one. After I had gone some way and arrived at the place indicated I found the bed of the stream, which was bone dry. I now turned round to go back whence I had come when on the side of the valley there appeared several dismounted Boer scouts. They did not seem to have noticed me, so I moved along the base of the hilly ground, keeping out of sight, and walking cautiously with an eye on them as if I were deer-stalking, till I arrived at a point where I could not avoid coming in view. No sooner was I perceived than some of the scouts unslung their rifles and opened fire, but by good luck I escaped being hit, for I took care to run as fast as I could in zigzag fashion. The battery, which ought to have opened fire, remained silent, and when I reached it in a breathless condition I had some acrimonious words with the subaltern, but I resisted the temptation to complain of his negligence when I made my report at headquarters.

We remained at Meerzicht for a fortnight, when we rejoined the 7th Infantry Brigade and marched to Amersfoort. As usual, when under Buller's command, owing to a comparatively late start, our baggage did not arrive till some hours after camp was reached—indeed, on this occasion, not until next afternoon. The night was bitterly cold and after dark my cousin, Robert Makgill, who, as I shall presently mention, had been taken on as our medical officer, and I set off on a foraging expedition into the little township of Amersfoort, in which we should have been billeted. We were prepared to go to any length in order to lay hands on anything of the blanket order, but we found that the houses were proof against amateur cracksmen, and though we forced our way into a

coach-house we secured nothing of any use, but annexed a large white sheet which we removed from the owner's chariot. This furnished so little warmth that we decided not to lie down on the frozen ground, but spend the night in walking about. When morning came I heard that some of our men, possibly belonging to my company, though I hardly think that they were aware of my bad example, had slipped out of the bivouac during the night and by mistake had invaded Buller's dwelling, where their distinctive dress—for we wore the kilt in South Africa—had betrayed them, and in consequence the regiment received a rap over the knuckles from headquarters, which we felt ought to have been delivered elsewhere.

I have mentioned that my cousin Makgill was attached to the regiment, for I had met him for the first time after I got back from Pretoria, and I had got it arranged that he should replace the battalion doctor, who had died from the effects of the siege of Ladysmith. Makgill's father, Sir John Makgill of Kembuck in Fifeshire, at one time captain in the Royal Engineers, had married one of my Uncle Robert's daughters and having resigned his commission had settled in New Zealand. His second son, Robert, who held an important administrative post in that colony, had volunteered to serve in South Africa, and on his arrival to join us I had warned him that the next day he could count on a large attendance at the medical tent of those who wished to take stock of the new "Doc.," besides a proportion of men genuinely sick. I added that I was sure that, having a sense of humour, he would understand how to deal with the situation. I must here interpolate that my company, of which I had resumed command, had been commanded during my enforced absence at Pretoria by a captain of a non-Highland regiment, and the men, apparently resenting the presence of a "foreigner," or for some other reason, had got rather out of hand or what would nowadays be called "bolshy." I therefore surmised that "D" Company would be well represented at the morrow's seance, but I was far from suspecting what would actually take place.

Makgill, be it noted, a civilian and not accustomed to deal with soldiers, told me the story of his experience, which was as follows. On going to the tent he found from the sick

states that, as I expected, the major part of the sick belonged to my company, and the first man on being asked what was wrong complained that he had a toothache and indicated where the trouble lay. Out came Makgill's forceps and in a flash the malingerer was relieved, not painlessly, of the offending molar. I forget the sequel of the story, though other excuses calculated to avoid so unpleasant an ending were proffered; but several of the patients were hoist with their own petard, and the laugh went against "D" Company, while the humour of the doctor in dealing with the situation was not forgotten for some time and redounded to his credit, as also did later his coolness and care of the men under fire. He did not remain long with us, and before he left he was presented by the officers with a silver cup as a souvenir of his service with the Gordon Highlanders; while on the day of his departure he was showered by the subalterns with rice and old shoes.

The march was continued from Amersfoort with little interference by the Boers until on the 21st August, when the battalion was thrown out as a flank guard of the column with which we marched. The country over which we were moving was not unlike the South Downs, where trees are few and far between. We had gone about three or four miles when I was bidden to move to a ridge on my right, where it was reported that the cavalry were hard pressed. I took a half company and moved off at once, passing on my way a wounded artillery major who was lying on the ground enjoying a pint of champagne, which had been carried in one of the battery limbers. He told me that there were Boers on a ridge about 700 yards away, which I soon knew, for we came suddenly under heavy rifle fire. We then crept forward and took position behind such cover as stones and ant-hills afforded, losing several non-commissioned officers and men in the process. Behind one of the ant-hills I lay with Sergeant Gilchrist, the officers' mess sergeant, who had served with me at home. He, as well as another sergeant, Forbes, the orderly-room clerk, used to join my company voluntarily when they could be spared from their normal duties and, being keen soldiers and marksmen, I was glad to have them with me. Like some of the officers, I did not carry a rifle, which was done to make them indistinguishable from the rank and file, for we had suffered

heavily earlier in the war by having claymores in action. So I watched Gilchrist's proceedings round one side of the ant-heap as he picked off man after man of the Boers when they unwisely showed themselves. The enemy fire was heavy and accurate, and seemed to come from several directions; and as night drew on we began to run short of ammunition and it looked as if our opponents might pluck up courage and rush the position. So we lay ready for them with bayonets fixed till it was quite dark, when my company and two others who were on the ridge closed ranks and marched back to camp.

As we were forming up before we left the ground I got the fright of my life when one of the men close to me fired his rifle by mistake. In the darkness a lance-corporal and a private soldier of my company somehow went astray and fell into the hands of the Boers, and I believe that I am correct in saying that these two and myself were the only representatives of the 2nd Battalion of my regiment who were captured during the war. Fourteen years later, when I was in command of the 3rd Division in Flanders during the Great War, the said lance-corporal, being then a lieutenant, met me and explained the mystery of his disappearance at Van Wyk's Vlei, where he was captured.

At this time, each day was so like the next that I will not enter into details. It will suffice to say that the pursuit eastwards resolved itself, under Buller, into a game of long bowls, in which we got rather the worst of it. He was not a "three-o'clock-in-the-morning general," and the troops under his command had to pay for his dilatoriness in leaving camp daily.

We kept plodding along eastwards till we reached a village called Machadadorp, which the Boers had just quitted, but where a few of the inhabitants remained. Those of them who had shops were prepared to do business with us, and as I was at this time in charge of the officers' mess there was a chance of replenishing our steadily diminishing supplies. At one shop I got a sack of potatoes and some groceries, and, best of all, in a field found three good-sized pigs, which after a chase were rather noisily slaughtered. The only means of carrying them was in the company stretchers, and, hidden by blankets, the inanimate porkers looked strangely like the usual occupants

of these receptacles, which, fortunately, were not that evening required for their normal purpose, for had it been otherwise there would have been no pork chops or crackling at the night's collation.

The infantry at this time when on the march were covered on front and flanks by the cavalry, which, strangely enough, was in command of two officers, one of whom was the gold stick-in-waiting, while the other was the silver stick. These officers lived up to the title of the courtly offices they held, for our advanced-guard had difficulty in avoiding treading on their heels, so deliberately did they move.

As the advance was continued we arrived at the Drakensburg, where the cold nights in the open, thanks to the late hour of marching and non-arrival of baggage, brought on my earlier attacks of fever and ague, and at the end of October it was decided that I ought to go home. Shortly before this, as there seemed to be a prospect that I might be transferred to the 1st Battalion of my regiment, I applied to be allowed to remain with the 2nd, with which I was then serving. While I was on the sick list my friend, Frederic Gordon, who was on Buller's staff, came to see me and showed me a copy of what in his own handwriting the general had written on my application. This was: "Captain Haldane is an excellent officer and has had the bad luck to be both wounded and taken prisoner; but his escape from Pretoria does him great credit, and I strongly recommend his application." This was indeed the *amende honorable*! A few days later I heard that I had been posted to the 2nd Battalion, but as events turned out I did not rejoin it, for I did not again serve as a regimental officer in either peace or war.

During one of my friend Gordon's visits his news included the story of a certain general officer who sometime earlier was in command of a small independent column and was anxious to display the energy and zeal with which he was performing his duties. On return from a march through part of the enemy's country he had telegraphed that he had captured a farm, six horses, and two hens. Owing to the omission of a word in the enciphered message, the meaning of which could not be guessed, the said message had to be repeated twice, and when properly deciphered it was acknowledged by a nasty slap from Buller. The sender of the message was a



man of approved courage, for otherwise he might have laid himself open to the retort that he had included himself among the last items in his message. Gordon also told me that Lord Roberts, no doubt recollecting the grant to the troops who took part in the march from Kabul to Kandahar during the Afghan War, had recommended to the Secretary of State for War that a bronze star, as well as the usual medal and clasps, should be given for the campaign in South Africa. His suggestion was not viewed with favour, and led to a mild snub from Army headquarters.

The time was drawing near when I would leave the force under Buller, and while I was still in the hands of the doctors we had one rather disturbed night in our bivouac. We had just settled down when the Boers began shelling the spot where we were camped, although the cavalry had earlier reported that the hills for some distance were clear of the enemy. Fires were at once extinguished and about thirty shells arrived, doing a certain amount of damage. One officer, Luxmore of the Devons, was hit in nine places by shrapnel and put in a bed alongside mine, and, strange to say, when his temperature was taken next morning it was found to be normal.

In course of time I arrived at Pretoria, where it was arranged that I should be smuggled on to the special train which was to take Buller and his staff to Durban *en route* for home. Before it left I paid a visit to the Model School, which I found had become a hospital for British sick and wounded. Thereafter I journeyed to Pietermaritzburg, where a day or two later I appeared before a medical board and was invalided home. As I was feeling much better by this time I came to the conclusion that it was unnecessary for me to leave the seat of war. I was, however, mistaken, for the morning the *Orcana*, the Orient Line steamer which was to take me home, sailed I had a sharp attack of my malady, my temperature rising to 104 degrees, and I had to be carried on board.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### RETURN HOME—AT THE WAR OFFICE.

I HAD hoped that the vessel on which I sailed might touch at St Helena, which island was being used as a place of internment for Boer prisoners, not only on account of its association with Napoleon, but because my grandfather had gone through an experience there which, had it ended otherwise than it did, might have terminated the possibility of a successor in the direct male line of my family.

He, like some of the younger sons of Scottish landed families, had joined the Honourable East India Company and was third officer on board one of their vessels. Among the passengers was a captain of dragoons—a notorious bully and a successful duellist—who, as became known later, had been forced to leave the King's service on account of his quarrelsome propensities. This captain one day insulted Haldane at the mess table by throwing a glass of wine in his face. The occasion for this action arose through Haldane, who was a much younger man, having refused to lend himself to some paltry trick designed to provoke an irritable invalid who, as it turned out, was at the time actually dying. But the objectionable soldier little knew the spirit he evoked. To rise from his seat and dash at the head of his assailant a heavy ship's tumbler was the work of an instant.

This led to a challenge, and when the ship reached St Helena those concerned went on shore and the two antagonists were placed at twelve paces distance and were to fire together at a given signal. Without a sign of trepidation my grandfather, who had slept so soundly on the previous night that he did not awake till he was called, drew the trigger, when the pistol burst, inflicting a wound on his face. The other pistol missed fire and the challenger intimated that he was willing that the affair should be terminated, whereupon the

combatants bowed to each other and parted with civility, but, as might be anticipated, without reconciliation.

That was by no means the only occasion on which my grandsire proved that he was not to be trifled with. Before his final voyage to the East, being then twenty-five years of age, he had been nominated to command an East Indiaman, the *Melville Castle*, which with other vessels formed part of a convoy of thirty-six ships then collected at Portsmouth. The crew of one of the ships had earlier shown a mutinous disposition, and the assistance of one of His Majesty's ships had been called in. But the situation soon became so grave that it was feared that the mutineers might carry the ship into a French port, or in the drunken condition of some of them gain access to the powder magazine and end the strife by blowing up the ship and all on board. At this critical moment Captain Haldane of the *Melville Castle* appeared at the side of the vessel, his approach being the signal for renewed and angry tumult. The shouts of the officers, "Come on board," were drowned by the angry cry of the mutineers, "Keep off, or we'll sink you!" The scene was appalling, and to venture into the midst of the infuriated crew seemed to be an act of daring amounting almost to madness. Ordering his men to veer round the stern, in a few minutes Haldane was on the quarter-deck. Though urged by the officers he refused peremptorily to head an immediate attack on the mutineers, but very calmly reasoning with the men, sword in hand, telling them that they had no business there and asking what they hoped to effect in the presence of twenty sail of the line, the quarter-deck was soon cleared. But observing that there was still much confusion and inquiring where the chief danger lay, he was down immediately at the point of alarm. Two of the crew, intoxicated with spirits, were at the door of the powder magazine, threatening with oaths that they would blow up the ship. One of them was in the act of wrenching off the iron bar from the door, while the other had a shovel of live coals ready to throw in. Haldane, instantly putting a pistol to the breast of the man who was busy with the iron bar, told him that if he stirred he was a dead man. Calling at the same time for the irons, as if disobedience were out of the question, he saw them placed first on one man and then on the other. The rest of the ringleaders were also

secured and they and the chief mutineers put on board one of His Majesty's ships, and Haldane, everything being quiet, returned to the *Melville Castle*.

My grandfather's elder brother, Robert, entered the Royal Navy in 1780, serving under his uncle, Captain Adam Duncan (the future Admiral, Viscount Duncan of Camperdown), and also under Captain Jervis (later Earl St Vincent), taking part in several engagements in which he earned the approbation of his commander, who wrote to his uncle and predicted that he would one day be an ornament to his country.

But neither Robert nor his brother, James Alexander, was to win further renown on the quarter-deck of a man-of-war or East Indiaman, for both devoted themselves to religion. They undertook an evangelical mission in the Highlands, and Robert spent large sums of money in the furtherance of the work, which is still remembered in parts of Scotland, though it did not find favour among some of his aristocratic relations.

Although we did not anchor at St Helena we made a stay of a few hours at Cape Town, where I had time to buy some copies of the articles in 'Blackwood's Magazine' regarding my escape from Pretoria, which had been reproduced in book form. The price of this publication was one shilling, and twenty thousand copies of it were sold. For each of the two magazine articles I was paid £50, and for every copy of the booklet one penny. Later on I produced an enlarged edition with illustrations, at the price of five shillings a copy, but the profit from it was inconsiderable. At the time of my escape I had, after discussing the matter with Le Mesurier, undertaken to write an account of our adventures, and though there was no financial agreement between us I decided to hand over to him one-third of any profit there might be. However, after settling with him I do not think that I got anything approaching two-thirds of the profit, for I had to pay for presents to several people concerned in the escape. Later there came a charge of £100 in connection with the wool among the bales of which we had been hidden. This had been consigned to a German at Lorenzo Marques, but he subsequently failed to adhere to his bargain, the price of wool fell, and I felt obliged to meet the loss.

But to return to the voyage home, during which for the second time I was to cross the equator, on both occasions

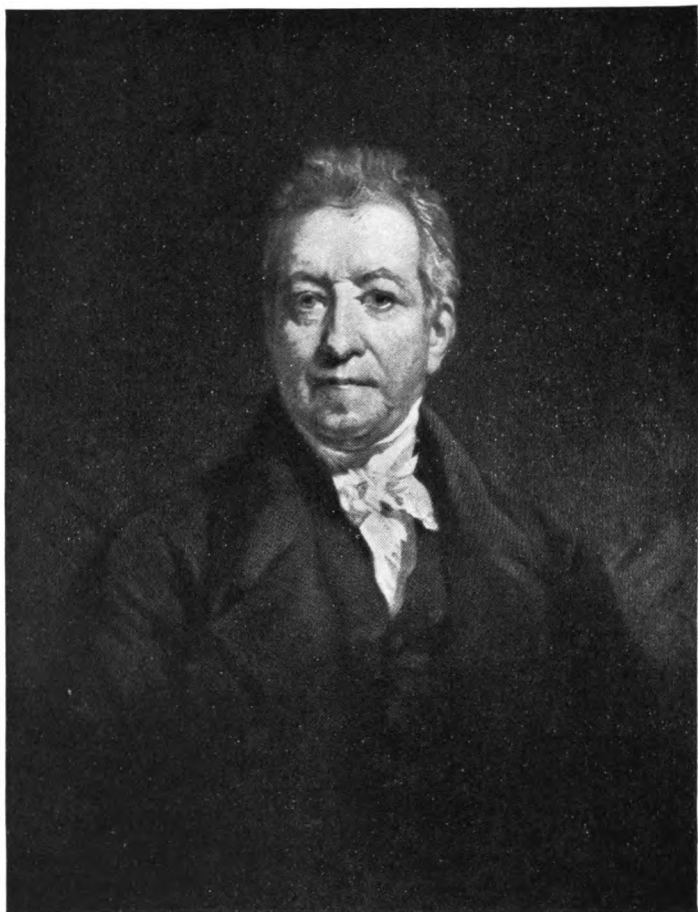
with none of the customary ceremonies. I had hoped that the sea air would drive the malaria from my system. In this I was disappointed, and several years passed before it was effected; and on arrival in England I was obliged to remain on the sick list for several months. Soon after we landed at Plymouth I was invited to lecture on my adventures, in order to raise money for charitable purposes, and this I undertook to do occasionally on the understanding that I should gain no personal financial benefit.

As I realised that the English winter would be trying I arranged to spend some weeks on the Riviera. There at lunch one day with General Sir George Higginson I met the Duke of Cambridge, who with his sons was making a stay at Cannes, and he invited me to have tea with him and tell him about my South African adventures. The Duke did not seem to approve of the way in which his successor as Commander-in-Chief, who had shortly before arrived home from the Cape, was presiding at various functions, which were generally relegated to the royalties. Speaking of Lord Wolseley, who had replaced him some time earlier as head of the Army, he generously remarked that perhaps the time had arrived for a change, as Wolseley was possibly more up to date than himself.

Some years later, when Sir George Higginson was in his hundredth year, I was invited to be present when the Duke of Connaught unveiled the memorial in St James's Park to the Guards. On this occasion I felt touched when His Royal Highness made the old General and Guardsman share in the unveiling by holding his hand and the cord when he performed the ceremony. I was amused when the veteran field-marshal, Lord Methuen, who was also present on the platform, made as if to help the centenarian on to his legs, and the latter seemed somewhat snappishly to resent his readiness to assist.

It was while at Cannes this winter that I played my first game of Bridge, which was not then so popular as in later years. Lord Brougham, who was one of the four players, claimed to have introduced the game from Turkey, but I am not prepared to say how far he was correct in this statement.

I returned to London in March, and on 19th April was gazetted brevet-lieutenant-colonel from the date when I



My Grandfather, aged seventy-seven, by Colvin Smith.

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would attain the rank of regimental major. The only other officer similarly rewarded for the war in South Africa was Henry Wilson, and Sir William Nicholson, to my surprise, told me that Wilson had represented to Lord Roberts that as I was in possession of the Distinguished Service Order, he—not for any particular action—would like to have that decoration, in addition to the brevet, and he became the recipient of both.

On the 17th June I was, as well as Major Wright of my regiment, commanded to present myself at Marlborough House to receive at the hands of King Edward the Queen's Medal for the South African War. As this was the first occasion that I had been in the presence of His Majesty, who was Colonel-in-Chief of the 10th Hussars and the Gordon Highlanders, I was directed to kiss hands, which was duly done, Queen Alexandra looking on from the background. The thing that struck me on this occasion was the number of officers of the 10th Hussars who, including their colonel, received the medal, for the regiment was still on active service.

I had been passed fit for service in May and was given employment in the Intelligence Branch under Sir William Nicholson, and while there I was appointed to be secretary of a committee on pom-poms. It was presided over by General Sir Neville Lyttelton, and later I was also secretary of a committee on machine-guns, of which Sir Charles Douglas was chairman. The first of these weapons, under the fire of which I had been at the action at Bergendal, had mainly some moral effect, while as regards machine-guns I was convinced that their importance had not been fully recognised in our Army. As secretary I did my best to point out what I felt, but the recommendations of the committee were ignored, probably on account of expense, and later on because every penny was needed for the Territorial Army.

About this time, when one day I was in Sir William Nicholson's office, there arrived from Lord Kitchener, who had succeeded Lord Roberts in the command in South Africa, a cable in cipher which General Botha, who commanded the Boer forces, had been allowed to despatch to President Kruger in order to obtain his instructions on the question of surrender. In transmitting the message, Lord Kitchener urged that it should be deciphered, for it was, of course, not *en clair*. The



cipher was a figure one, and in a very short time one of Nicholson's staff made its contents known by using Littré's French dictionary. What the contents were I do not know, but I imagine that the obstinate old Dutchman to whom it was sent vetoed the idea of surrendering.

When I took my leave in the autumn I spent part of it at the Autumn Manœuvres in France, and with me went an ex-confederate General, Joseph Wheeler, who had served with distinction in the North and South War in the cavalry, and had known several of the commanders whose names were familiar to me, and later in life had become a keen politician. As we had not taken bicycles with us nor made arrangements for horses or some kind of vehicle, we were obliged to follow the operations on foot, and the ex-cavalry commander, who was many years my senior, did not appreciate that method of locomotion. His knowledge of French was elementary, and his trans-Atlantic outlook caused me some amusement, not to say embarrassment at times. One day, hot and dusty, we arrived at a village where in front of an inn there stood a wagonette drawn by a good-looking pair of bay horses. My friend, who had remarked the vehicle when it passed us a few minutes earlier, suddenly and without saying a word left my side, and before I could catch him up reached the liveried footman who was standing at the head of the horses and was heard ejaculating repeatedly in a loud voice a single word which sounded like "*louer*," while pointing to the carriage. The man-servant as well as the coachman were staring at him with amused astonishment, for the occupants had fortunately disappeared into the inn, probably concluding that they were in the presence of the proverbial mad Englishman. On catching up the general I explained that the vehicle was a privately owned one and that there could be no question of hiring it. But to no purpose; my explanation did not satisfy him, for he was probably imbued with the belief, held by many of his fellow countrymen, that everything was procurable for dollars, and it was with some difficulty that I succeeded in bringing to an end his efforts to bargain, which were restricted only by his linguistic deficiency.

At the end of September, not having expended all the annual leave to which I was entitled, I went to Dunrobin Castle for a week, then to Philorth, and finished up at Oxford,

where I gave a lecture to a large concourse of young people who were delightfully enthusiastic. Between then and the end of the year I went to Campsea Ashe, where I was to spend many pleasant days in years to come with my hosts and their successors, whom I number amongst my kindest and most loyal friends. Following this I renewed my acquaintance with Port Eliot, where the pheasants seemed to be "taller" than when I was quartered at Devonport, and altogether too high for my insufficiently practised guns. That visit was followed at Christmas by another to Trentham, and while there I gave a lecture at the Institute, in which establishment the beautiful and charming Duchess took a great interest.

On reading what I have written regarding my activities at this period it seems that I have laid myself open to the charge of devoting myself to pleasure rather than work. That, however, is far from being the case; and though I took my leave when I could best be spared I never exceeded the annual amount to which I was entitled. If permission was granted to attend foreign manoeuvres, it was on the condition that one paid one's own expenses and submitted a report on what one had seen.

In the latter part of 1902 the situation in Somaliland became threatening and, as there was a prospect of operations on a scale greater than those which had been periodically carried out by local forces in that country, I was appointed to be secretary of a committee whose chairman was Lord Hardwicke, the Under-Secretary of State for War. Its duties were to deal with matters connected with a possible campaign in that country on a considerably larger scale than heretofore.

The prolonged nature of the operations against the "Mad Mullah" in Somaliland, which showed no signs of being brought to a close and caused some drain on the British exchequer, provided an opportunity for an attack on the Government; and on 30th April I was ordered to attend the House of Commons as it was possible that information of a military nature might be required, although the actual attack was purely political. I was given a seat under the gallery, and soon Mr Lloyd George, who was put up by the Opposition, rose in his place. With fiery eloquence he assailed the Government, but he made little impression on me, for all the time he was speaking I felt that his knowledge of his subject was superficial, though

sufficient to disguise that fact from his supporters, who knew even less than he did. Bluster can go a long way towards casting a veil over ignorance, and the future Prime Minister showed that he was a master of political camouflage. The reply to his extravagant language came from Lord Cranbourne (later Marquis of Salisbury). It was couched in far less aggressive terms, almost too much so I thought, but it sufficed to demolish the arguments put forward by the Opposition speaker.

In the autumn I was very busy as, in addition to work connected with the "Mad Mullah," the preparation of a handbook on Canada and routine duties, I was chosen to take charge of twenty foreign officers who were to be present at our Army Manœuvres in the south of England, which were to be on a more extensive scale than usual. The arrangements were left to me, and I was ably assisted by Major Fasson, R.F.A. As I anticipated, no information or record of any kind could be found at the War Office which might have been helpful as regards what had been done on earlier occasions of a similar nature. This led me to determine that I would ensure that no other officer who might in later years be entrusted with such a duty should have cause to complain regarding lack of information.

At the last moment an officer senior to me was put over my head, but he was only nominally in charge of everything, as the preliminary arrangements and what occurred during the manœuvres fell to me. This officer was a bit of a horse-coper and had just returned from Dublin where he had purchased several hunters at the horse show, and he did his best to induce some of the foreigners to invest in what I thought was rather indifferent horse-flesh. He failed to do so and got no help from me, for I disapproved of his proceedings.

It had struck me that it would be a good idea to arrange for some attraction for my foreign charges and allow them to see something of English country life, so I communicated with certain land-owners of my acquaintance whose estates were situated in the manœuvre area. These were kind enough to fall in with my suggestion that I might bring them in the afternoons to visit their residences. I took them, therefore, to Savernake, Bowood, Corsham, and Lockinge, the owners of the last two places being old friends who were kind to those

of the profession of arms. And here I may mention that at Corsham our host, Lord Methuen, told me that Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, who was present on the day we went there, had just offered him the post of commander of the forces in Scotland. After the unfair abuse that had been showered on him as the result of the losses in the Highland Brigade at Magersfontein in the South African War, he said, as I thought wisely, that he had declined the offer.

On the first evening at Marlborough, where I had reserved quarters for the foreign attachés, there was almost a catastrophe, for the *chef*, whom I had obtained from the caterer Benoist in Piccadilly, got drunk and the dinner had to be prepared at short notice by the cook of the small commercial hotel.

Cars to take the attachés to the manœuvre ground daily had been supplied by an organisation known as the Volunteer Motor Corps, the members of which gave their cars free and drove them. Among the drivers was Lord Russell, who later married my dear friend, Elizabeth von Arnim, of "German Garden" fame, and with him I spent an interesting day when I had a place in his car.

Among the German officers was the late Count von der Schulenberg, then military attaché at the embassy of his country in London, who in the war of 1914-18 rose to be chief staff officer to the Crown Prince; and another, Captain von Poseck, who later became inspector of the German Cavalry. I met the latter at German Army Manœuvres, when he was staff officer to the Inspector-General of Cavalry, and he did not, as did other German officers, including Schulenberg, avoid speaking to an English officer, fearing no doubt to prejudice themselves with their military brethren.

On the evening after the manœuvres ended the King gave a dinner to the foreign officers and others at the Whitehall Rooms, at which the Duke of Connaught presided, when I was congratulated by the Adjutant-General, Sir Henry Hildyard, on the way I had carried out my duties with the attachés, more especially, as he said, after my nose had been put out of joint by having had at the last moment an officer put over my head. Some time later, when the French Government sent a cross of Officer of the Legion of Honour for the officer who had been with the attachés, the senior British repre-

sentative made a bid to get it. Colonel Robertson, who had a say in the matter, insisted that it must be given to me, since I had done all the work. I also received the Second Class of the Royal Crown of Prussia, and afterwards I heard that I had been nominated for a Japanese decoration, but that someone at the British legation at Tokio had intervened and had scotched the matter. Not long after I learned whence the obstruction had come. The Japanese, however, were not to be denied, and I received a handsome screen with panels of silk, on which were embroidered charming designs. I may mention that this *objet d'art* found its way in 1940—never having been used—to help the funds of the Red Cross.

Soon after the manœuvres it became known that Lord Roberts was dissatisfied with his powers as Commander-in-Chief, and that the Government had decided to dispense with the office and, as in the case of the Navy, place the land forces of the Crown under the control of a board of management. Lord Roberts had earlier threatened to resign unless the restrictions of which he complained were removed, and it was no doubt felt that a suitable opportunity had arrived for weakening military control and so strengthening that of the civil element.

The change which this would cause would not take place immediately, and in the interim, as I had some unexpended leave at the termination of the manœuvres, and as soon as I had completed my detailed report on my charge of the attachés, I arranged to go to Spain with a friend. On the 11th October we left town, taking with us bicycles, and did a number of tours in the south of France before crossing the Spanish frontier, visiting the Pass of Maya in the Pyrenees, where my old regiment, the 92nd Highlanders, had particularly distinguished themselves in July 1813, as well as the battlefield of Orthez, in which they had taken part. After this we entered Spain and spent a day on the field of Vittoria, where I was surprised to find that the map of the ground in Allison's 'History of Europe' was accurate, though nearly a hundred years had elapsed since the battle had been fought. Indeed, so far as I observed, there were no more houses on the battlefield or its vicinity than there were in 1813. But there is no country in which I have travelled in Europe

which takes one back to mediæval days more than does Spain.

I abstain from describing the sights of Madrid, where we went next, but while there, on the Sunday afternoon following our arrival, we attended a bull-fight. The first bull required three thrusts of the ill-directed sword of the matador before he fell dead, but the slaughter of the next victim was a painfully prolonged business. The matador, owing perhaps to the shouting and booing of the bloodthirsty crowd at his lack of skill, seemed to lose his nerve, and at least ten thrusts were made without effect. At last the unfortunate animal, after galloping round the arena, his neck transfixed by the sword, succumbed when the matador managed to find a deadly spot. This exhibition and the sickening spectacle of the blindfold horses being charged and overthrown by the enraged bulls were beyond endurance, and I was on the point of fainting as we made our way from the scene, where several more murders were to follow.

I arrived back from Spain on the 5th November, and on the 7th, a Saturday, we had our first half-holiday. Mr Arnold-Forster had replaced Mr St John Brodrick as Secretary of State for War, and the staff was now permitted to leave the War Office at 1.15 P.M. I find it difficult to believe that up to that time we had worked from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. during six days of each week, and the number of hours was now further reduced. Before I left the War Office in 1909 one officer only of each section of the Intelligence Branch was required to be present on Saturdays, a very different affair from the days when we had no weekly half-holiday.

The closing days of 1903 come clearly back to my memory, for both on Christmas and Boxing Day in the following year I was required to be in my office owing to the possibility that a cable might arrive from Somaliland which would need immediate attention.

At this time affairs in the Far East were assuming a serious aspect, and, contrary to general military opinion, I was convinced that Japan had no intention of yielding to the Russian colossus which was threatening to make herself mistress of Korea and Manchuria. I had been rather impressed by what I had seen of the four Japanese officers who had been at our manœuvres some months earlier, and I felt that, hidden behind

an outwardly submissive attitude, there was a steel-like resolution which would not easily be overcome. I knew that the army of Nippon was in a high state of efficiency and that war with Russia, which would be a life or death struggle for the smaller kingdom, was almost certain to come. The officer who was in charge of the Far East section of the Intelligence Branch disagreed with me. He pooh-poohed the idea of a war and seemed to regard the Japanese as a harmless kind of people, "good-natured little fellows," as he called them, "who would not dare to stand up to a great European power." We agreed to differ, but I noted in my diary under date 7th January 1904, "Japan and Russia, it seems to me, are certain to come to blows."

On the 22nd of that month Sir William Nicholson told me that if I liked he would put my name forward to become military attaché at Paris, but at the same time he pointed out that he thought it would be better for my interests that I should remain where I was until the completion of three years' service under him, when I would automatically become brevet-colonel. At this tide in my affairs my guardian angel must have whispered in my ear advice which much affected my future, though it made me an enemy and led to my participating in another war. I thanked him and said that I would do what he recommended and remain at the Intelligence Branch.

On the 1st February a bombshell fell in the War Office in the shape of the report of Lord Esher's Reconstruction Committee. According to its recommendations it was stated that "new measures needed new men," and that all heads of departments ought to be removed from their posts. As General Nicholson had been at the War Office for only a comparatively short time and would be one of the victims of this drastic measure, he felt naturally aggrieved. He and Admiral Fisher, then First Lord of the Admiralty and a member of the Reconstruction Committee, had crossed swords at meetings of the Imperial Defence Committee, and the latter had been worsted in argument by the able War Office representative. They were not therefore on the most amicable terms, and the admiral was not tolerant of anyone who opposed him.

At first when word of Nicholson's practical dismissal came it was softened by the offer of a high command, and it was







General Sir William Nicholson.

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suggested that he might become Military Member of Council in India, a post next to that of Commander-in-Chief. He wavered on the subject of this latter offer, as few soldiers knew India as well as he did; but he was not anxious to return to the East. When, therefore, he asked my advice I replied, "Remain here and they will be forced to re-employ you."

A few days passed, and on the 6th February he sent for me and asked me if I would care to go to Japan with him as his staff officer. It may readily be imagined what my reply was. He next stated that earlier in the day the Secretary of State for War had suggested that he might be willing to go to that country as senior British military representative. At this time Russia and Japan were on the brink of war, and it had been decided by the Government that an officer of higher rank than the military attaché at Tokio should represent Great Britain in a military sense. I was told to say nothing about what had passed between us, but make all arrangements for our journey. That evening it was announced in the Press that the Japanese had broken off relations with Russia; and for several days I was busy obtaining the necessary equipment for the campaign and bidding good-bye to relations and friends.

I may mention that a few days before we left London I was dining out and met Rufus Isaacs, whose meteoric career can hardly be said to have begun. Amongst other things of which he spoke during the interesting conversation I had with him he told me that when he had to deal with some abstruse legal case, a clear issue to which was not speedily forthcoming, he made a point of sleeping over it and in the early morning a solution would generally offer itself; for he disliked burning the midnight oil, as so many barristers were in the habit of doing.

On the 18th my mother and sisters accompanied me to Euston Station, where a number of people had assembled to bid good-bye to Sir William Nicholson, and among them were Lord and Lady Roberts and their daughters. Lord Roberts was not particularly friendly, but he may have been annoyed with the innocent cause that Henry Wilson, who was not present, was not accompanying Sir William. When a few days earlier he heard that my general was to go to Japan he

called on him and asked him who he was taking as his staff officer and expressed a wish that Wilson should hold that post, but Nicholson said that he had already decided to take me, which ended the matter. My selection, in which I had no voice, had a sequel which did not redound to Wilson's credit. As I have earlier said, he and I had been at the Staff College at the same time, where we had worked in a syndicate and been good friends, yet because I had been chosen to go to Japan I was to be the object of his hostility from that time onwards. I had noticed that Wilson had shown no disposition to continue the terms on which we had been at the Staff College, and, being at a loss to fathom what was the matter, I asked Nicholson, who was then a field-marshal and a baron, if he could enlighten me on the subject. He replied, "I thought you knew the reason for his behaviour to you. It arose from the fact that I took you with me to Japan."

At the time I was told this Henry Wilson had been appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and knowing that, for some unexplained reason, he had for many years ceased to be friendly, and as during the Great War something or somebody was an obstacle in my path, I thought it would be advisable to clear up any misunderstanding if such existed. For that reason I asked the field-marshal, who, on the last occasion I saw him before he died, stated what I have said. Wilson was what the French term a *faux bonhomme*; he could be charming in an outward sense, but woe betide whoever might stand between him and his future prospects, and I was by no means the only victim of his malevolence.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR.

WE sailed on the White Star liner *Majestic*, which I had seen launched some sixteen years earlier from the shipyards of Messrs Harland & Wolff at Belfast when I was quartered there. The captain of the ship was E. J. Smith—at whose table I sat when the state of the weather permitted—who went down with the *Titanic* of the same line when some years afterwards on her maiden voyage she struck an iceberg. I made friends with an American, F. G. Colby, and others on board I knew were Lord Caithness, Sir Mitchell Thomson, a former Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and Mr Hamilton Benn (now Sir Hamilton Benn, Bt.).

On landing at New York after a rather stormy passage we were welcomed by a friend who had been one of the military attachés at our previous year's Autumn Manœuvres. He piloted us through the numerous press reporters and then took us to lunch at the Union Club, the interior decorations of which he humorously described as a combination of early Pullman and late German-Lloyd styles. Later in the day we had tea with Mrs Robinson, President Theodore Roosevelt's sister, and at night left for Montreal, which, like New York, was in the grip of a severe frost.

Our next stopping place was Hamilton, where I had friends, and from there Niagara was visited, after which we went to Ottawa and paid our respects to the Governor-General, Lord Minto, and Lord Dundonald, whom I had known in South Africa during the Boer War. At night, joined by Captain Thacker of the Canadian Artillery, who had been appointed representative of the Dominion with the Japanese Army, we continued our travels westward. Owing to a heavy snowfall the train was much behind time, but we had a short halt at Winnipeg, which allowed us to see something of that city in company with two Canadian officers, one of whom I shall

have cause to refer to when I describe my return across the American Continent some twenty months later.

Vancouver was reached on the 7th March, when we passed almost from winter to summer, for it was warm and rain was falling; and in the afternoon we sailed on the *Athenian*, a 2000-ton vessel which was taking the place of one of the fine steamers of the Canadian Pacific Line. On board her, except the general, Thacker, and myself, there were no passengers but a correspondent, Mr Smith, of the 'Standard.'

We had an unpleasant voyage to Yokohama, which took nearly three weeks, for the ship was a slow mover and more like a tramp than a mail boat. One night the wind blew with hurricane force, the window of the saloon was smashed and two boats were carried away by the heavy seas that swept the vessel from stem to stern. Though the engines ran at top speed we made only sixty miles in twenty-four hours; and the engineer had to stand much of that time with his hand on the throttle to prevent the racing of the screw.

I lay below in misery, for the banging of the waves against the side of the ship was such as to make sleep impossible, and only with difficulty and by jamming myself into my berth with pillows could I avoid being flung on to the floor of the cabin. However, "time and the hour run through the roughest day," and we managed to weather a storm which caused the captain a good deal of anxiety.

On the 26th we arrived off Japan, and next morning found ourselves being escorted through a mine-field and past the quaint-looking forts to the quay at Yokohama; whence we proceeded by rail to Tokio.

Sir Ian Hamilton, who had been nominated as Indian Army representative with the Japanese Forces, had already arrived and was staying at the British Legation with the Minister, Sir Claude Macdonald.

Our arrival at the capital was the signal for a succession of functions, dinners and receptions at the various legations, besides visits to the heads of the military, naval, and other departments of State. One morning Sir William and I, conducted by the Minister, drove to the palace to be presented to the Emperor. On arrival at what is a large building—mainly constructed of wood and enclosed by more than one great wall and at least two moats—we were met by a couple

of aides-de-camp in evening dress and a crowd of flunkeys in knee-breeches, long black coats and white silk stockings, whose appearance recalled the band of Dresden china monkeys. Preceded by the aides-de-camp we made our way along several lengthy passages, which were carpeted with the products of Axminster, till we emerged into a great hall which had a fine parquet floor. On two of its walls were great pictures in tapestry depicting scenes of Japanese hunting, and in one corner was a gigantic cloisonné vase on a stand filled with flowers of the magnolia species. The windows on one side of the hall opened upon a garden in the centre of which was a fountain; and round the sides of this garden were small wooden buildings, which were probably used for tea-drinking and the ceremonies connected therewith.

We waited in the hall for some time, when several high court officials appeared, and through more passages we were conducted to the audience chamber. Here I was bidden to remain while the Minister and Sir William made their entry into the presence of His Imperial Majesty. I was in the full dress of the Gordon Highlanders, and on our way to the audience chamber I had noticed that my appearance had created some curiosity and interest. When my turn came to be presented I made the customary bow at the entrance of the smaller room in which the actual presentation took place, another half-way to the throne, and the final obeisance as I approached His Imperial Majesty. He was in undress uniform and was a most unimposing figure, with toes turned inwards and white cotton gloves extending well beyond the tips of his imperial fingers. Standing beside the Emperor was an interpreter, and through him I was asked a few set questions, such as, "How long have you been in Tokio?" and "How long do you propose to remain?" To the first question I replied, "A few days," and to the latter part of it, "For the duration of the war." Thereafter I took my leave and backed out of the presence.

But that did not end the morning's entertainment, for we three British were next taken to another part of the palace to be presented to the Empress, a ceremony which seemed less formal than that through which we had just gone. The little Imperial lady was dressed in European style, in a pale green silk gown on which flowers of other colours were

embroidered. From her shoulders to her waist hung some lavender-coloured tulle, and the simplicity of her attire was relieved by a few strips of black velvet. The sole ornament she wore was a large gold horse-shoe brooch. In attendance on Her Imperial Majesty were two ladies, who were garbed in green-coloured dresses. I noticed that the Empress was rather underhung, and her lower row of teeth was prominent.

After addressing a few words to the general I was directed to approach nearer by one of the ladies-in-waiting, who spoke English, when the Empress made several observations in her own language. One of these, as the master of ceremonies afterwards told me, was, "What a very brave man this must be to wear so beautiful a uniform." Whether she meant that to appear so dressed demanded courage—for Highland dress may never before have been seen in Tokio—I cannot say, but I was told that she also said that she would like to have as a bodyguard a regiment dressed in kilts. Not satisfied with desiring me to come closer a first time, I was honoured, as Sir Claude told me, by being bidden to do so a second time, when there passed a whispered colloquy between the Empress and one of her ladies. As what they said was cast in their own language, of which I knew only a few words, I cannot say what they were, but had I understood it is possible that they might have brought a blush to my cheeks.

The same evening we dined at the legation, when Sir Claude told me that, when he was Minister at Peking and arrangements were being made for the foreign contingents to march through the Forbidden City, an amusing incident occurred. It had been decided at an earlier meeting of the several commanders that the detachments should be proportionate to that of each country's total military forces in China, and this decision had created a spirit of competition. The first to be asked at the final meeting was the Japanese general, who gave as his total force 20,000. The Russian general, Linievitch, was next questioned, and he "went one better," claiming to have under him one thousand more men than the Japanese had. As the words left his lips General Chaffee, the United States general, muttered in a voice audible to all present, "That's a god-darned lie anyway." Linievitch, who pretended that he could not understand any language

but his own, turned to the French general and said, "*Qu'est-ce qu'il dit?*" Needless to say that the Japanese and Russians, between whom no love was lost, were exaggerating the numbers of their respective contingents.

Before the evening was over Sir Claude told me that by appearing in the full dress of my regiment I was doing him a service, as my uniform provided a never-ending subject of conversation; and anyone who has had to associate with Japanese and their eternal "yes" and "no" will appreciate what he meant. Before long I was to know this, and at dinner-parties when seated next those who knew no English, by concealing one's knowledge of French, which some of the Japanese knew, one could eat one's dinner in peace and not have to rack one's brain for subjects of conversation, the only response to which would be a simple negative or affirmative.

Not long after my arrival in Tokio I met a British merchant, Mr R. J. Kirby, who had passed many years in Japan and knew the people intimately, and by him I was given some hints in dealing with them which proved to be invaluable in my relations with officers of the Army.

On first arriving in the country of the Rising Sun I looked at everything through rose-coloured spectacles. Things seemed so dainty, so quaint and different from what I had seen elsewhere in the East that my imagination was stirred and I was transported to the days when the swashbuckling, two-sworded samurai held sway in the narrow streets and sometimes in his drunken bouts placed the lives of the "foreign devils" in imminent peril. As time went on this fairyland began to fade away, all was not gold that glittered, and the gilt came off the gingerbread. However attractive to the outward eye the little women might be, some with gaily dressed mites slung to their backs, no sooner were relations opened with their lords and masters than a change came over the scene. We were regarded with suspicion, every foreign officer was looked on as a potential spy, and smile and giggle as they might the Japanese officers were at heart all of one pattern and, under a veil of humility, were arrogant and conceited. But there were exceptions, and a few of them, more particularly graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, after a time during which they got to know us better, seemed to view us with



more favourable eyes and even displayed tokens of respect and affection.

Kirby told me that the Japanese in commercial dealings were, unlike the Chinese, dishonest and would swindle you if they could. Their mentality did not admit of sentiment where foreigners were concerned; their own interests were paramount and, even in an alliance with Great Britain, they would take care to secure all the benefit and leave us nothing. As a nation they were fundamentally false and, like the Germans whom they aped, they were not ashamed to be caught in a lie; for, in spite of the talk of Bushido and chivalry, they did not regard untruthfulness as reflecting on their honour. They will, he said, endeavour to put those with whom they have relations in the wrong so as to profit thereby, and will strive to bring about a loss of temper which may be followed by intemperate words, at the same time taking care themselves to exercise self-restraint. The habit of avoiding direct answers to questions is exasperating to those who are not accustomed to dealing with them, but a smiling face and quiet persistence would often carry the day. One must be careful not to throw doubts on their veracity, but rather lead them to believe that what they said was accepted as the truth.

I was inclined at first to think that Kirby was prejudiced in his opinion about our allies, but before long I realised that he had uttered words of wisdom; and at the front I had many opportunities of practising what he recommended. In the end I came to the conclusion that, like coloured races in general, the Japanese had to be dominated and that it was absurd to regard them as being on the same level as European nations.

Many years after the war in Manchuria I was interested, indeed surprised, to read in an introduction by Viscount Cecil of Chelwood to 'Japan's Continental Adventure,' by Ching-Chung-Wang, published in 1940, the following sentence which bore out what Kirby had said to me thirty-six years earlier. It is: "In the pursuit of what are thought to be the interests of the Japanese State no moral rule holds good, every crime and cruelty is permitted."

It is to be regretted that the truth of what is stated in the above-quoted sentence was not recognised by Great Britain and the United States.

Turning to the sister service, our relations during the war,



Lieut.-Colonel A. Haldane, Attaché with Japanese Army in Russo-Japanese War.

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so far as we soldiers were concerned, were slight. Those naval officers whom I met struck me as being more serious than those of the Army, and this characteristic was noticeable in the highest and down to the lowest grades. There was among them an absence of the smiling countenance and that aping of the Germans—more particularly in the staff—which was part of the make-up of the Army officer. It was evident that the Japanese Navy had profited by its association with ours and had taken it as a pattern in many ways. The officers of that service, I was told by someone, held in high respect my friend, Captain William Pakenham, our naval attaché, who later on, under Admiral Beatty, commanded in the Great War a cruiser squadron. At the battle of Tsushima, Pakenham did not enter the conning-tower of the battleship on which he was, but remained on deck; and when a shell burst and killed someone near him, bespattering with blood his white uniform, he disappeared below. The Japanese assumed that he had done so with the view to his personal safety, but to their astonishment he appeared a few minutes later, having changed his soiled garments for clean ones.

I noticed that to the Japanese sailors Lord Nelson seemed to be the embodiment of everything great in a naval commander, due, I imagine, to the fact that he had died in battle. In the window of a shop at Tokio was an oleograph which depicted the scene on the quarter-deck of the *Victory* at the moment when he fell mortally wounded; and I never passed that shop without noticing what a great attraction that crude picture had for the public.

Pakenham, whether in uniform or plain clothes, was always beautifully turned out, and even in the middle of a naval battle it required more than a Russian shell and its possibly lethal effects to disturb his equanimity or allow him to forget what he no doubt felt the outward appearance of a British naval officer demanded.

Meanwhile there seemed to be no immediate prospect of our proceeding to Manchuria, where the campaign was gradually developing after the landing in Korea, so Sir William and I went for a few days to the charming little village of Miyanoshita at some distance from Tokio, where there were natural hot baths and a most comfortable hotel. While there I continued my study of the Japanese language with a student whom I

took with me, but he proved to be useless as a teacher, for he knew nothing of the grammar, and to his annoyance I dispensed with his services.

It had been settled by the general, in conjunction with the Japanese military authorities, that three parties of foreign officers should be attached to the armies in the field—viz., the First Army under General Kuroki, which was to move from Korea to Liao-yang; the Second Army under General Oku, likewise engaged in a similar direction; and the Third Army under General Nogi, whose duty it would be to lay siege to Port Arthur. In addition to these forces there was a rather smaller army which was to act as a link uniting the First and Second Armies.

The first group of officers was to join Kuroki's army, and among them would be Sir Ian Hamilton and several other British, including our military attaché at the legation. The next party, with which would be Sir William Nicholson, would be attached to the Second Army.

At this point I must mention that after we reached Tokio Sir Ian Hamilton invited me to come to the legation to have a talk with him, when he informed me that in his opinion Nicholson or himself, or, failing either, the former's staff officer, who was myself, ought to remain in Tokio and not proceed to the front. Presumably the idea he had in his mind was that someone should be left with the object of acting as a kind of post office through whom the reports of the attachés at the front would be transmitted to England and India. I replied that Sir William had no such idea in his mind, and that, so far as I was concerned, I had been appointed to be his staff officer and that where he went I would go. The transmission of reports was a work that demanded no particular ability, and I knew that my general's view was that as many officers as possible should have the opportunity of gaining experience of war on a grand scale by passing some time at the front and not kicking their heels at Tokio. The subject then dropped and it was not again raised; and when I repeated to General Nicholson what had passed between Sir Ian and myself at the legation he smiled and said that the reason for what had been said was apparent to him. The matter did not, however, end there, for after the group of officers, with which were Sir Ian Hamilton and the military attaché at the

legation, had left for the front it became known that my name had been omitted from the names of British officers sent to the Japanese War Office who were to accompany the Second Army.

The atmosphere about this time at Tokio, though outwardly friendly and, on the part of the British legation, hospitable, disguised a certain amount of hostility, and this state of things did not cease till the first group of attachés had left to join General Kuroki's army. We were mistaken, however, in supposing that all sources of annoyance had thereby been removed; and I am convinced from what followed, as will presently be shown, that plans had been evolved which were intended to stand in the way of our proceeding to the front at an early date.

About the middle of June—that is to say, nearly two months after our arrival at the capital—I noted that discontent was on the increase among the British and foreign officers, as well as the war correspondents, who naturally looked to Sir William to ensure that no time was wasted in arranging for them to proceed to Manchuria to carry out the duties which on the one hand the military authorities and on the other the editors expected them to perform. Not a day passed that I was not tackled on the subject by either officer or correspondent, and though I tried to induce Sir William to meet their wishes, which conformed to my own, I did so in vain. He argued that the Japanese were engaged in a life or death struggle and that we must not expect them to pay much consideration to foreigners such as ourselves. Indeed, he maintained that the British authorities would be far from pleased were he to take active steps to urge them to comply with our wishes.

And here I said that I respectfully begged to differ. I was aware that he had twice written to the Secretary of State for War to say that he might be disappointed that so little profit had been derived from our having been sent to Japan; so I told him that in my opinion he would shortly find himself, as well as the other officers, recalled to England unless we made a beginning in those duties for which, at considerable expense, we had been sent to the Far East. He did not agree with my view, and I left the seed where I had planted it. It was by this time becoming plain that he had no desire to quit

Tokio and its flesh-pots, such as they were, in order to undergo the discomforts incidental to a campaign in a semi-civilised country. I decided, therefore, to bide my time till some opportunity presented itself, of which I could take advantage for furthering my wishes and those of the other officers and correspondents.

As the Japanese military authorities had so far withheld all information regarding the progress of the war and had not even given us a map of Manchuria, I saw my way to play on his *amour-propre*. I therefore pointed out that such treatment of the military representative of a great power—a power which was not only an ally but which was practically holding the ring for the combatant we hoped would win—had now reached a pitch which I and others thought was positively insulting; and I added that it would certainly not require much pressure to effect a complete change in the Japanese attitude.

I feared that I had not made much impression by what I had urged, for I was trying to convince him against his will and inclinations; and as the British Minister, when talking with the general, studiously avoided the subject of our going to the front, it seemed that the latter was, by his complacency, unwittingly playing into the hands of intriguers who, for their own ends, wished to postpone our departure for as long as possible, perhaps until the war had come to an end. A modern representative of Pharaoh stood between us and the Promised Land, but his calibre was such that it would not require a Moses to ensure his discomfiture and at the same time our exodus.

I must pass over much that followed, as space will not allow of my referring to it in detail. As the days went by Sir William began to show that the seed planted was growing. He displayed symptoms of uneasiness regarding his position, and at length I succeeded in persuading him to point out to Sir Claude that he would be obliged to suggest the recall to England of the attachés unless a term was placed to the continued delay, which showed no signs of coming to an end. Sir William thought that when the Japanese heard of this ultimatum they might call the bluff, but I felt sure that they would not adopt such a course. It was inconceivable that they would allow the attachés, who belonged to a friendly

nation, to be withdrawn while permitting those of other countries, some by no means so well disposed, to remain. He did not seem to realise the strength of his position nor wish to do so, but before the end of the day he had come round to my view.

To make a long story short, for the intrigue or whatever it may be called had lasted for weeks, Sir Claude's hand was forced and I was amused when the naval attaché, Captain H. de M. Hutchison, who was a friend of mine, told me that the ambassador, for Sir Claude had been given a step up in the diplomatic service, had somewhat inadvisedly remarked to him that it was "all the fault of that firebrand Haldane, for, had it not been for him, Nicholson would never have agitated." This remark, which clearly indicated what his attitude had been throughout the period of detention at Tokio, proves that Sir Claude, instead of assisting in every way those who had been sent by our Government to perform an important military duty had, if indeed he had not placed every obstacle in their way, at any rate given no help whatever. I heard later that at the outset of the war he had urged the British Government to send only four attachés, and he may have been annoyed that his recommendation was ignored.

At this point I must allude to my efforts to gain a knowledge of the difficult language of the country, the lack of which I felt would be a considerable handicap once we were in Manchuria. As I mentioned earlier, I had taken as an instructor a young Japanese student and found him useless, but by the aid of a phrase-book and grammar I made some progress. As time went on I determined to spend a night in a Japanese inn at some distance from Tokio, where not a word of English would be spoken, and so test my knowledge. With this object I arrived one afternoon at a wayside railway station on the route to Kofu, a large manufacturing town, and making my way to the village nearby inquired for quarters for the night at the only hostelry I could see. The establishment was a modest one, the proprietor of which on seeing me showed some surprise, visitors other than Japanese being rare. I was given a room, and towards evening *futons*, or a kind of feather or cotton mattress, were produced which would form my bed. I passed some time trying to converse with the *nesans*, or servant girls, and as the dinner-hour approached



it was intimated that my bath was ready, and I was conducted to the place of ablution and helped by one of the *nesans* to remove my garments. That business completed the next item on the programme consisted, as I knew from what I had read in a book, of a thorough scrubbing by the female attendant before entering the bath of those parts of my person which were not easily accessible. That concluded, scoops of hot water were thrown over me from head to foot, and the moment came for entering the bath itself. This consisted of a fair-sized wooden barrel, through which ran an upright pipe connected with a stove. Being the principal guest that evening I had the privilege of having the first claim to the bath, while others, and last of all the servants, would follow in their turn. This system, by which an economic use of the hot water results, though it may sound insanitary in the ears of a European is not at all so, for entry into the barrel was preceded by a thorough cleansing, and the hot water, which was continually renewed from a cistern of cold, was probably purer than the tepid stuff in public baths at home, those using which not having been scoured beforehand.

Before starting on my excursion I had been warned to take some rolls with me, as bread would not be procurable, though rice, which takes its place, would be forthcoming in plenty.

I passed a comfortable night rolled up in the quilts, and when handed the bill in the morning was astonished at the modest amount demanded. But in Japan it is customary, indeed obligatory, for the guest to give, in addition to the regular charge, what is in the nature of a tip, or what is called a *chadai*, and the amount given depends upon his rank, for the higher that is the more trouble he is expected to cause. I took care therefore to give a generous tip, which was evidently appreciated, since on bidding farewell I was presented with a diminutive towel and a picture postcard of the inn.

On the 6th July Marshal Oyama, the Commander-in-Chief-Designate of the Japanese Force in the field, left Tokio, foreign ministers and attachés being present at the station, but the British attachés were conspicuous by their absence—a hint, in which I had a hand, that we were dissatisfied with our treatment. The same day the editor of the Japanese newspaper, 'Asahi,' came to see Sir William. After his interview

he asked me for my opinion so far as it related to the attachés being sent to the front. I felt sure that he wanted me to say that they were discontented with the action of the authorities, but I had not forgotten what Kirby had said to me. I therefore replied that we had been given a promise that we should go and that as honourable men we trusted the authorities to adhere to their undertaking and allow us to start as soon as possible and convenient. This the Governments of the several countries to which the attachés belonged expected they would do, and the sooner we went the better we should be pleased. I added that we soldiers were servants of our Government and were not like war correspondents, who naturally murmured at the delay as they were losing credit with their editors for sending no news to them.

On the evening of the same day Colonel von Förster, the senior German attaché, a genuine Prussian whom I appreciated for his military qualities, said to me that, had he known that Sir William would not be present at the departure of the Commander-in-Chief, he certainly, as well as his *confrères*, would not have gone. I had purposely breathed no word of the general's intentions, as it would not have been proper that the British should have conspired with foreign officers in such a matter, and moreover, if we alone were not present, our absence would be more noticeable.

While the question of our future movements was in abeyance I one day had a talk with Mr Satow, the editor of the 'Nichi Nichi Shimbun' (the 'Japan Times'), a most intelligent Japanese, who did his best to preserve good relations between his people and the British. He told me that he had approached some important personage and that the Emperor himself, who had been communicated with, had given orders that we were to be sent to the front without further delay.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR (*continued*).

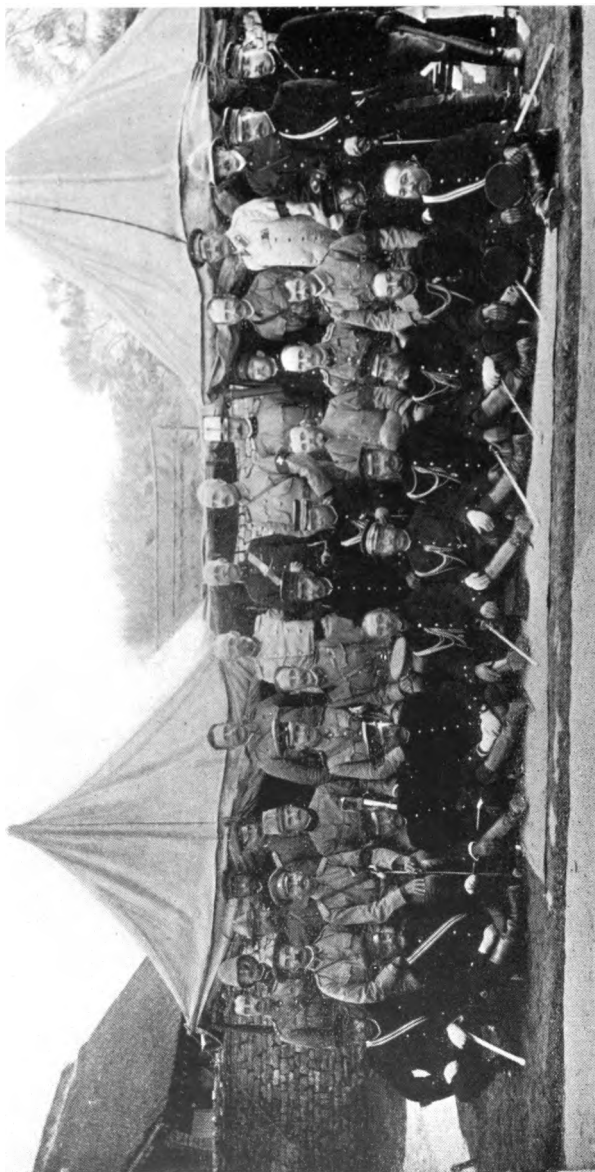
OUR time of weary waiting at the capital of Japan at last came to an end, and on the 20th July we left for the front. I felt no little relief at turning my back on the atmosphere of intrigue and disingenuousness in which we had breathed for the past few months.

On the 22nd we arrived at Shimonoseki, where we remained for two days, and then embarked on the *Aki Maru*, of 6000 tons burthen, which carried 900 men and 271 horses; and it can be imagined how packed the troops were on decks with low head-room. It crossed my mind that should the ship be sunk by enemy action few on board would have a chance of escape, for the number of boats would not have sufficed for a fourth of the human beings. As it grew dark all port-holes were closed and blinded with folds of brown paper, for the Vladivostok squadron was said to be at sea.

On the following morning we landed at Ta-lien-wan and proceeded to a Chinese bungalow where, while waiting for our baggage, we were offered drinks. Colonel Tulloch, one of the attachés from India, Thacker, and I walked to the Nan-shan Peninsula, where two months earlier the Japanese had won a desperate two days' battle, which opened the way to Port Arthur. Before our eyes we had an extraordinary example of Japanese economy, for every scrap of warlike debris had been salvaged and shipped to the mother country to be utilised again by the army. On landing, too, I had noticed large quantities of worn-out shoes, which I heard were to have a similar destination and after repair would find their way again to the front.

During the afternoon, when taking a stroll, we came across three Chinese coolies who, seated on the ground, were enjoying their evening meal. On drawing near it was noticed that they were sharing their rice out of a blue-enamelled utensil





Group of Foreign Military Attachés—Russo-Japanese War.

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such as is more usually associated with the bed-chamber than with the kitchen. My companions and I burst into laughter, in which the rice-eaters joined, but whether they detected the reason for our hilarity I am unable to say.

Our march towards the front was a leisurely and fatiguing business, for the Japanese officer, Colonel Watanabe, who was in charge of the party, insisted on moving at a snail's pace, which was never changed to a faster one. Whoever tries to sit on a horse for twenty miles or so in hot weather will agree with me that the same number of miles on foot, certainly so far as I am concerned, would be much less fatiguing. The Japanese, however, seem to prefer a slow pace, possibly because their short legs and round thighs would make it unsafe to adopt a more rapid method of progression. I noticed that our mounts were habitually saddled and bridled at least an hour before the time fixed for starting; they were given no mid-day feed, and if they developed sore backs little attention was paid to the matter. Although the weather was warm, the poor beasts had under the saddle both a thick *numdah* and a blanket, and the sweating that resulted was a fruitful cause of abrasions. I strove to prevent my mount—a waler—from suffering in this way and succeeded in so doing, but my efforts to carry a nosebag with a small feed in it were not viewed with favour, and after being frustrated more than once I desisted. At night the animals were not allowed to lie down and, being soft at the outset of the campaign, they soon lost condition. The impression I brought away from Manchuria was that the Japanese are the world's worst horse-masters.

The senior Japanese officer in charge of our party—there were three officers and two interpreters—soon began to display signs of hostility, while he kept on rather better terms with the other attachés, especially the French, as at an earlier period of his career he had been attached to their army. He appeared to be annoyed that he had been selected for his present job and was not serving with troops. I sympathised with him, but that we should be held responsible and have to suffer from his ill-temper, though perhaps natural, was illogical. After a time he became so objectionable that we had to complain and he was sent back to Tokio and given employment in the arsenal. He was replaced by another Japanese colonel, who

bore the same patronymic as himself—as common as is Smith in the United Kingdom.

Continuing our wearisome way we arrived at Hai-cheng, a walled city, where we were lodged in what we were informed was a Chinese club, which bore no resemblance to its prototype at home. Here we were strictly confined within the walls and forbidden to take exercise outside either on foot or horse-back, no doubt lest we should communicate with the Russians, though we were given to understand that the restriction was intended for the security of our persons.

The weather was hot, averaging about 103 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade, and the flies were troublesome, the more so for Chinese cities are not noted for cleanliness. There was great difficulty in inducing the Japanese to provide us with drinking water; for, unless boiled, the local supply was said to be dangerous for Europeans. Beer was forthcoming in plenty, but the sugar in it created excessive thirst, and at length, when I could no longer bear the privation, I took to imbibing the contents of a well, fortunately with no deleterious results.

As soon as we had settled down I began writing from the meagre material at my disposal the history of the Second Army from the date it had landed in Manchuria, at the same time endeavouring to link it up with what I could glean regarding the other two armies which were moving northward on a broad front in the direction of Liao-yang. I was anxious to obtain a picture of the great converging movement, as I realised that sooner or later someone would have the task of completing, for the benefit of our own army, an account of the operations in Manchuria, little thinking that that task would fall on me. At the same time I prepared reports regarding the various items of military interest which had so far come under my notice.

I do not wish to be accused of blowing my own trumpet, but the reports submitted by me to the War Office drew from Sir William Nicholson the remark that they were excellent and contained much valuable information; and my cousin, Lord Haldane, wrote to my mother that they had attracted much attention and that Lord Roberts had spoken of them in the highest terms. From another quarter, however, I was told that I was being given credit where none was deserved,

and it was hinted that the real author was Nicholson, who happened at that time to be sick in Tokio!

Two days after we arrived at Hai-cheng we went to General Oku's headquarters. He was in command of the Second Army and was grim, spare, and, for a Japanese, tall, and aged between fifty and sixty. I heard later that he was addicted to drinking more *saki*, the Japanese equivalent for whisky, than was good for him; but as most persons of his eminence have at some time in their lives been accused of indulgence in the bottle I had learned to put little faith in such tales.

On arriving at his camp we were met by his chief staff officer, a pleasant-looking man and as friendly as his general was reserved. I recognised the sub-chief, Colonel Yui, whom I had known at Calcutta four years earlier when I was aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief.

Presently General Oku emerged from his tent and with him was Prince Nashimoto, who later on in the war had a cavalry command. The general, with a face like a mask, looked the party of foreign devils up and down, as if he viewed them in that aspect, and then in jerky, rasping tones addressed us in a speech of greeting which sounded to me more like a sentence of death than anything else. When he had concluded, Sir William replied in a few well-chosen words. As no one among the foreign officers understood what the Japanese general literally spat at us, our interpreter, who had no knowledge of military expressions, had the task of translating the oration into English, which he did with some hesitation and not a little trepidation.

On our return to the Chinese club he confided to me that what had taken place had been for him an ordeal for which he was far from prepared. It appeared that General Oku's speech of greeting was interlarded with Chinese—as an Oxford don might have introduced Latin or Greek into an English oration—and the unfortunate interpreter, who had been a clerk in an office at Kobe, had been nonplussed and at a loss to guess the meaning of parts of it. Fortunately, none of the Japanese present knew English well enough to detect any mistranslation, so were unable, not that they would have done so, to betray their embarrassed compatriot.

At this time I was caused a good deal of anxiety, as General Nicholson, from the heat and unsuitable food, became ill and



his temperature rose to 103 degrees. None of us felt particularly fit, though in course of time we became acclimatised, for the entire loss of exercise was beginning to tell on us. At the back of the minds of the Japanese I feel sure that there existed the hope that we had already had enough of active service with their army and would be ready to return to Tokio ; and on this subject I was sounded by Captain Inouye, who was one of the officers attached to us. I hold him innocent of participating in the plot to get rid of us, for he could not have been better disposed than he was throughout the whole period he was with us. I told him plainly that our orders came from home and that we had no voice in the matter, and intended to remain at the front until the war was at an end or we were recalled to England. This put a stop to attempts to terminate our attachment to the Japanese field army and the subject was not again raised.

Our stay at Hai-cheng ended on the 26th August, for a battle was imminent ; and four days later, after some skirmishing with the Russian rear-guard, we arrived at a low hill on which General Oku's day headquarters were situated, at a distance of about 5000 yards from the Russian front-line. On the evening of the second day of the battle we were informed that the action was for the time being at an end and that we could go to a village close by. I had hardly turned to go when a heavy bombardment began, and I insisted on staying to see what was about to happen. Colonel Yui protested, but I pointed out that the British were allies of the Japanese and that we were interested in their success, and at length, though it was now almost dark, I and two other British were allowed to stay on the hill. We had up to this point been permitted to see next to nothing of what was in progress and had been given no information. I was tired of being dry-nursed and felt that the moment had arrived when it was necessary to assert ourselves unless we were always to be kept in the background, and from that day onwards we were treated more like allies and less like spies.

When we got back to our quarters it was found that our baggage had not arrived and no explanation was vouchsafed ; but next morning the reason was forthcoming. Attacks on the Russian position had failed, and as a precautionary measure all impedimenta had been sent back to the camp which we

had occupied twenty-four hours earlier, lest a withdrawal southwards should be necessary. Great, therefore, must have been the relief of the Japanese when it was found next morning that the Russians had quitted the line of hills covering Liao-yang and fallen back to an inner position nearer that city—a retrograde movement which was no doubt due to the fact that General Nodzu's army had come up on the right of that of General Oku.

The same morning we were invited to ride round the position which the Russians had been holding, and in single file we followed the grim old general. As we passed some of the troops which were forming up preparatory to being launched against the second position I was surprised that the general took no notice of them nor they of him, though they had had a stiff fight and deserved a word of commendation.

Before Liao-yang was captured there was more hard fighting, and restrictions as to our movements being now somewhat relaxed, the attachés were able to evade the vigilance of their warders and gather a good deal of information, which was embodied in their reports on the battle.

By this time I had formed a high opinion of the fighting qualities of our allies—that is to say, of the infantry and engineers, on whom the brunt of the engagement had fallen. In order to clear the way through the barbed wire the latter had not hesitated to sacrifice themselves, and their losses had been exceptionally severe. At one place I was shown by a young Japanese officer a spot where his company of engineers had lost 50 per cent in killed and wounded, and his was not the only unit that had suffered heavy loss.

By the 5th September Liao-yang had fallen, and for some days we were not allowed to enter the city, but were quartered in some railway buildings south of it. Sir William was by now very weak, and on the advice of Lieut.-Colonel Macpherson, R.A.M.C., the medical officer with us, he went back to Tokio. Sorry as I was to part with the general, and important as it was for him to get back to civilisation, I felt that the time had come to demand more information than we were getting and that his temporary absence would be an advantage. Several of the attachés, myself included, had made remarks in letters regarding the treatment we were receiving, and as letters were censored it had begun to dawn on the

Japanese that there was good reason in what we wrote. They probably felt that there might be a reaction in England which would prove unfavourable to their cause. In consequence there shortly came from Tokio instructions that the tap of kindness should be turned on in the hope of soothing our ruffled feelings. Like the Germans, the Japanese are at times obtuse beyond anything one could imagine. At one moment they will be offensive and at the next cringingly polite, yet they seem to think that so sudden a *volte-face* will pass unnoticed.

The first indication that our random shots had hit the mark arrived in the form of an invitation to a large luncheon party—a forgive-and-forget entertainment—which was given to the attachés and which was attended by numerous general and other Japanese officers. Quantities of wine, spirits, and beer were consumed at the luncheon when, as usual, our hosts strove to make inroads on the sobriety of their guests, not without success, more especially where the German officers were concerned.

At this party I learned that on such occasions in the Japanese Army it is not considered derogatory to exceed, and a few years later the British military attaché at Tokio sent in an official report an account of an incident of which he had been an eye-witness. He had been invited to be present at an inspection of the Guard Division by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. This function was preceded by a lengthy luncheon, at which the general commanding the division became so intoxicated that at its conclusion, being quite incapable, he was carried outside and in view of everyone laid down in the shade of a tree, there to recover from his too deep draining of the "replenished goblet." The thing which most struck the attaché was that no one seemed to take any notice of this breach of decorum. The inspection went on without interruption, but minus the presence of the commanding general, except in so far as he lay speechless under the greenwood tree.

Not content with giving us one feast of reconciliation at Second Army headquarters, the Japanese invited us to attend another at those of the First Army.

After the first of these orgies, at which many toasts were drunk, there was a performance of conjuring and "comic

turns"; and later two squads of men went through the ancient samurai war dances, which recalled the coloured engravings of Japanese warriors in armour apparently essaying, by making hideous faces and striking extravagant attitudes, to frighten their enemies.

During this entertainment I had a talk with General Fukushima, the sub-Chief of the General Staff, who had lost his second son earlier in the war, while another had fallen in the recent battle; and as he talked of his bereavement he smiled and showed no signs of what he must have felt. By this time I think he had somewhat altered the attitude towards us which I had noticed at Tokio and had come to the conclusion that we attachés were at the front not for our amusement, and that I for one had no intention of deferring to our Eastern ally. He said that for us British the *kao-liang* (millet, the principal crop of Manchuria), which from its height and thickness hid so much wherever it was grown, was henceforth to be regarded as cut and that we would be generously treated as concerned information. As he spoke I could not help wondering how soon another crop of that cereal would begin to sprout.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR (*continued*).

ABOUT a month passed after the festivities described in the last chapter when we began moving forward, and were now allowed to go where we pleased—the fresh crop of *kao-liang* not yet having appeared—and one day Tulloch, Thacker, and I made our way to where we heard the rattle of rifle and machine-gun fire. We had no knowledge of what was in progress, for the Japanese, if they told us anything, did so only after the event. The Russians seemed to be falling back in the direction of Mukden, closely followed by their opponents, and we arrived at a village where a number of wounded were being tended and, climbing on to the roof of a house to get a view of the flat country ahead, we came under rifle fire. A lull in the fighting followed and we descended from our perch, and, passing through some men who were carrying ammunition to the troops, arrived at others who were feverishly digging shelter trenches. At this moment the Russian guns reopened fire, the Japanese ceased digging and lay down, and we three took refuge behind some trees of much less diameter than the beeches at Burnham or the oaks of Birnam Forest. The infantry showed no sympathy with our situation, but were amused that we should be in the thick of it along with them, and after waiting for a quarter of an hour, while shrapnel crashed through the branches overhead, we retreated to the village.

Another day during the Russian retreat Tulloch and I were riding towards a hill behind which troops were assembling preparatory to an attack, when what appeared to be an ammunition column, consisting of small carts drawn by mules, came in view, moving towards us. Suddenly there was a commotion and the men on the carts began jumping to the ground and unslinging their rifles. We wondered what was causing the alarm and soon were to know. At the head of the column

rode a Japanese officer who, after shouting an order, drew his sword and cantered towards us. When he got near he must have guessed that we were not Russians, for we had shouted out "*Eikoku jin*" (we are British). He now saw his error, pulled up his pony and apologised, while his men burst into laughter. We pointed out the red cloth brassards which we wore on our arms, the emblem of attachés, but that seemed to convey nothing to him.

Between the battles in Manchuria there were long pauses, for the Japanese are not quick thinkers and are by nature deliberate and methodical. Do what one might, time hung heavily on one's hands. Some officers spent their enforced leisure in card-playing, for which they could hardly be blamed, but I avoided doing so in Manchuria and during the Great War, for I felt that it would inevitably distract my attention from the work for which I had been sent to the Far East. We were very short of literature of any kind, and I was driven to re-read such books as I had brought with me, and even study advertisements in 'The Times.' Taking exercise on foot or horseback over a dead flat country is apt to become wearisome, and if by chance one entered a village where troops were billeted one ran the almost certain risk of being arrested as a spy by one of the numerous sentries posted round it.

One afternoon when riding with Thacker we happened to get into the area occupied by the army on our left, which, after the fall of Port Arthur, had arrived on that flank, where we struck a division from the northern island which had probably never seen a white man. Reaching a village, to circumnavigate which would have meant a detour, we were challenged by a sentry who ordered us by signs to halt, and were marched to the headquarters of a battalion in a dwelling which we were directed to enter. Squatted on the *kang*, or raised platform—which is a feature of Chinese houses—with their jack-boots off, were three officers, to whom in my faulty Japanese I explained that we were British officers attached to General Oku's army. But my words seemed to make no impression on them and they evidently regarded us with suspicion. After putting their heads together a Chinese inhabitant was sent for, and it was not difficult to guess what was said to him. No doubt through fear and desire to please his listeners he stated that we were "Ruskies." At this we

burst out laughing, and I mentioned the names of several staff officers with the Second Army. At length the triumvirate must have come to the conclusion that they were mistaken, and before we continued our ride we were all on friendly terms and having tea together.

In December, after Sir William had returned to the front, a cablegram arrived from the War Office offering him the appointment of Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Gibraltar. This he decided to accept, and gave me the option of accompanying him home or remaining with the Japanese field army. As at this time I was, after a good deal of effort, extracting useful information from our allies, it was settled that I should stay where I was. I, however, returned with him to Tokio, passing through the Inland Sea and landing at Hiroshima on New Year's Day 1905, a place which, forty years later, was to be the earliest victim of an atomic bomb in the Second Great War.

I was not sorry to have a short change to Japan and find myself in a central-heated building; for the weather in Manchuria in winter is severe, so much so that the rivers become hard frozen and are capable of bearing the weight of heavy guns. Our dwelling at the front was heated in Japanese fashion by bronze braziers, called *hibachis*, filled with glowing charcoal. At various times during the day and last thing at night a servant would bring into our room—for the British attachés usually had to share a single sleeping-place—one of these *hibachis* and place it on the stone floor. If the charcoal had reached a glowing stage the fumes emitted were not so offensive as when accompanied with smoke; but how any of us survived the winter of 1904-05 in the atmosphere we breathed for many hours a day and all night is a marvel. We must have inhaled quantities of carbon monoxide with no worse results than severe headaches, which in course of time as we became fume-proof ceased to trouble us. So cold were the nights when the thermometer fell well below zero that sleep was only possible by retiring altogether beneath the blankets.

But to return to more civilised surroundings. Our arrival in Tokio was the signal for a repetition of those entertainments which had greeted our first coming there. I took the opportunity of everyone being in festive mood—Port Arthur

having fallen, and the approaching departure of the general—to extract from the General Staff certain information of which I was deficient and which I had not been able to obtain at the front. Hardly had Sir William sailed for home than Sir Ian Hamilton, who had been appointed to be Commander-in-Chief of our Southern Command, returned to the capital. I had been chosen to act as staff officer to him so as to keep me in Manchuria till the end of the war, and this led to my having to endure yet another series of boring entertainments until he himself left for home.

Before I quitted Tokio to return to the front I had what was a somewhat unusual experience for a European—a dinner in the intimacy of a Japanese home. Captain Inouye, whom I have earlier mentioned, had been invalided home and invited me to dine with him at his modest residence. The night was cold and I was threatened with an attack of fever and ague, so I was not sorry on arrival to be provided with a pair of woollen *tabis*, which, after removing my shoes, I pulled over my socks. We sat down, or rather squatted tailor-fashion—for me a rather painful pose—on the floor of the room which, as in all Japanese houses, was covered with beautifully made mats of fibre. The wife of my host did not at first appear, and when at length she did it was only to perform the menial office of pushing along the floor from the adjacent kitchen the plates bearing the eatables which we were to consume. The meal had evidently been prepared by her; and when she emerged from the kitchen she made a deep obeisance and thereafter disappeared. As I felt it awkward to accept this subservience on her part I made a gesture of protest, but Inouye made a sign to be silent and ignore the lady. Perhaps if the women of Japan, who are gentle little creatures, were not so dominated by their lords and masters the brutality of the males would be less pronounced; and it has struck me as extraordinary that such docile specimens of humanity should produce such cruel devils as the men of late years have shown themselves to be.

Soon after this I started again for the front, and in the same compartment was a Japanese gentleman who spoke English fluently and with whom I had some conversation. Among other things he remarked on the habit of self-depreciation which is typical of the British, and this, he said, had



the effect of misleading foreign students about our national character. He realised, though he did not quote the words, that this was a symptom of "that divine discontent which is behind improvement," and added that so long as we continued to avoid becoming self-satisfied he had no fears for our future. I agreed with what he said, but at the same time I felt that our habit of self-depreciation was sometimes at the root of misunderstandings, for others were prone to accept us at our own valuation and this might lead to unpleasant surprises. Still anything is better than the boastfulness that characterises certain nations, which arises no doubt from an inferiority complex.

When on my return to Manchuria I reached Ta-lien-wan, the port where most of the troops and stores were landed, General Nishi, who commanded the line of communications, kindly offered me a seat in his train as he was about to proceed on a tour of inspection; and on the 27th February, after a cold journey, and a still colder ride, I reached General Oku's headquarters.

On the 1st March, as I had anticipated, the attack began, and as it progressed we moved forward; but I will not give an account of what we saw during the ten days the battle lasted, as what I wrote at the time is now history and is contained in the reports which I sent home. I will, however, refer to the most interesting incident which I was fortunate enough to witness—that is to say, the great Russian counter-attack which was launched towards the close of the battle and which was a desperate effort to prevent the encirclement of their whole army at Mukden. At this stage of the fight General Nogi had come up from Port Arthur and was pushing round Oku's left and threatening the Russian communications. In doing this he was scarcely strong enough for the purpose and his front had become much attenuated, so that the situation tempted the Russians to take advantage of it.

It happened that, on the 6th March, Tulloch and I had been in the front-line, which was ominously quiet, but early next morning heavy gun-fire broke out, and looking towards Mukden which, owing to a haze, was only dimly visible, great forces, line after line, were visible crossing the plain in quick time, with only small intervals between them. In the mirage these troops had an almost spectre-like appearance and their

leaders, who were on horseback, resembled giants. As they moved over the open space that separated the combatants they came under heavy shell and small-arms fire, and on arriving at a hamlet, which was in Japanese occupation, desperate hand-to-hand fighting ensued. But the defenders succeeded in holding it, and next morning when I went to the scene of combat the ground was carpeted with the dead of both sides. Most of the Russian casualties lay between four and five hundred yards from the Japanese front-line, which made me think that our allies were not good shots or that they had exercised great restraint in withholding their fire until the enemy was at close range.

This counter-attack brought the battle of Mukden to a close, and on the 11th we moved into the city, where we were quartered in a Buddhist temple. The shops, which I had hoped would furnish porcelain and furs, were disappointing, for it seemed that before their departure the Russians had bought up most articles of value of that nature. Moreover, what remained was not to be purchased without wearisome bargaining, a process which to me is always distasteful, and I came to the conclusion that the Chinaman is a past-master in trade matters.

Like most, or indeed all, Eastern towns, amongst which Constantinople might at one time have been included—so far as relates to what I am about to say—Mukden had its full share of pariah dogs, in numbers reaching hundreds, if not thousands; and after the sanguinary battle on its outskirts a frequent sight was packs of these ownerless, half-starved creatures tugging from the frozen ground, where they had been hastily buried, what was left of the many Russian and Japanese soldiers who had fallen there.

One day when I had gone for a walk unaccompanied, I came upon a pack of these unsavoury brutes who were engaged in their ghoulish occupation and I pelted them with stones, of which there was at hand a plentiful supply. Angrily growling and snarling, they slowly withdrew, but directly my back was turned they resumed their activities. A few days later I was to realise what a risk I had run by interfering with the orgy, once more unarmed and alone, though nearer home. It happened in this manner. Not far from the place of Chinese worship where we were lodged, the same scene was being

enacted at a temporary burial-ground, but the dogs were more numerous on this occasion, and as I have stated I was again alone and vulnerable. As before, I hurled stones at the pack, expecting them to draw off, but they seemed to be aware that on the ground where they were savagely tearing up rotting corpses there was a scarcity of the ammunition which was plentiful on the earlier occasion. They ceased their occupation and, led by a big black dog, began walking towards me. Being defenceless, I slowly retreated, keeping my face towards my enemies, but as they became bolder I had to take to my heels, for they could easily have outstripped me before I reached the temple. On the way there was the trunk of a dead tree, the upper part of which had fallen off, and this I only just managed to reach before the pack caught me up. I scrambled up the trunk till I came to a fork about six feet from the ground, and there I looked down on my pursuers. As a boy I now remembered having read how hunters in America had been treed for hours by herds of peccaries or wild pigs, and I now found myself in a somewhat similar plight. The temple was some hundreds of yards away and not a soul was in sight, while beneath me the savage dogs were vainly striving to leap to my perch, where I hung only just beyond their reach. For a good half-hour I was besieged, but at length a Japanese soldier with his rifle appeared a little way off. When I shouted to him he started coming towards me, and as he got near the pack moved off and I was able to descend and continue my way to the temple.

One day a little later, when walking along a narrow lane, one of these pestilential brutes rushed past me, closely pursued by an officer with a drawn sword. Fortunately it ignored me, for it was mad and was shortly after killed. By this time these pariahs had developed into a public danger and several persons had been bitten by them, so a massacre of what could hardly be termed the innocents was ordained and their numbers were reduced to reasonable proportions.

In the meantime the Japanese armies had been following up the retreating Russians, but the pursuit gradually slackened and came to a stop. The Second Army with which we attachés were had lost twenty thousand men in the battle of Mukden and remained there until reinforcements arrived; and as the great operation which had been concluded presented

considerable scope for pen and ink I was not sorry for the halt. The main difficulty was to get straw for the brick-making, as the Japanese were dilatory and I was impatient to get to work before the next move. After several broad hints to the staff of General Oku's army I asked Marshal Oyama's principal aide-de-camp, Captain Tanaka, to do what he could to have the lectures which were occasionally given to us on the operations resumed. He did not seem disposed to help, but he must have taken certain steps for the usual solatium arrived from headquarters in the shape of a bottle of whisky, another of curaçoa, and several bottles of Tansan water, which is the Japanese equivalent of Schweppes—though that firm might not be flattered to be told so.

Now the Japanese have a sense of humour, though they don't like to be chaffed or laughed at, and Tanaka was not lacking in it. He was, too, given to quoting the Bible at times—not that he was a Christian—and this gave Tulloch and me the idea of turning it to account and having a sly dig at General Fukushima, who kept the purse-strings of information. We had not forgotten his statement after the battle of Liao-yang that the *kao-liang* was to be considered as cut so far as the British attachés were concerned. We therefore set to work and prepared a parody of the parable of the sower. I have forgotten most of what it contained, but it opened as follows: "A sower went forth to sow, and as he sowed he sowed *kao-liang*, and he watered it with whisky and Tansan. . . ." The composition terminated with a hint to the sower that the harvest would be commensurate with the sowing. It seems somewhat trivial after so many years, but the preparation of the parody helped to fill an idle hour. It was duly handed to the general, but I cannot say that it had an immediate effect.

This episode reminds me that some years later, when staying with Mr Pandelli Ralli for Goodwood races, I happened to read a book in his library entitled 'The Capital of the Tycoon,' by Sir Rutherford Alcock, which I recommend to those who wish to learn something of old Japan and the mentality of the inhabitants. In the spring of 1859 the author had been appointed to be the head of a mission sent to that then little-known country to establish diplomatic relations, as the consequence of a treaty entered into by Lord Elgin

with the Government of the Tycoon—the actual ruler of the country, the Mikado, being the spiritual head and held in durance until 1868. In this work Sir Rutherford gives an account of the first journey he made in the interior of Japan, during which he passed the chief cities of several of the daimios or petty princes. Arriving at one of these places he says: “Every house and every side street was hermetically closed; not a whisper was to be heard, nor was the face of a living creature to be seen. The side streets were all barricaded and shut out of view by curtains on high poles.” When the Japanese officer who was with Sir Rutherford was asked for an explanation of so strange an attitude of exclusiveness he was unable or unwilling to give one. He said that it was probably due to an order of the daimio himself or perhaps of his officers, or merely a mistake! It might be intended as an act of respect! It might even, he said, when pressed, be interpreted as a sign of anger and enmity!—which it would seem it was.

Later on, when the British legation was attacked and the minister and his staff narrowly escaped being assassinated, the Japanese Government sent next day, with an expression of regret, a jar of sugar—a present no doubt in the nature of a peace-offering, which was not accepted.

The experiences related in Sir Rutherford Alcock's volume recalled those of the British attachés forty-four years later, by which time it might have been supposed that contact with western civilisation would have caused some alteration in Japanese behaviour. But this was far from being the case; the leopard had not changed his spots; whisky and Tansan water had taken the place of sugar, and *kao-liang* represented the curtains of nearly half a century earlier.

While we were in Manchuria it struck me several times how the Chinese seemed to differentiate between the British and foreign officers. When they met us one would hear them say, *Tai Ingwan*, or some such words, which mean, I believe, Great English. I discovered the reason of this more than courteous greeting when we got to Mukden, where Dr Christie, the head of the Religio-Medical Mission, told me that the Chinaman's knowledge of the English was greatly attributable to the work of that mission. It dealt with considerable numbers of the inhabitants, who much appreciated what it did for them. This and some experience of such missions in India and Persia

convince me that attempts to christianise Eastern people can only be effective, if even then, when they are accompanied by curative measures as they were when the great Healer walked the earth.

A few weeks passed after the effort to get information while the ranks of the Second Army were being filled, when we were taken on an expedition to Chang-fu in Mongolia, where we were lodged in a kind of palace. While there we were visited by the governor, who was accompanied by several mandarins, whose ranks were denoted, I was told, by the glass ornaments which they wore on the top of their respective head-dresses. After the business of presentation had taken place the governor was invited to be seated, but this usually simple procedure was not accomplished until we had gone through a series of manœuvres which reminded me of the childish game of "musical chairs." It seems that to do honour to a visitor the etiquette is that he must somehow be made to take his seat first and his host after him, as is indeed the custom more or less in polite society throughout the Western world. But in China the process of getting into a chair in company is somewhat more complicated. Indeed, the Chinaman is so painfully polite in this matter that in order to get you to take your seat first he will resort to almost anything short of actual violence. Thus, having been warned beforehand what we might expect, the governor and his following of mandarins began a game of bobbing up and down until, helped by childish recollections, we succeeded in outwitting their antics and getting them safely established in chairs.

It was noticeable that on the forefinger of the governor's right hand a case was worn, the object of which was to preserve from damage an abnormally long nail; for the possession of such a growth is regarded as an outward and visible token that the owner does not demean himself by soiling his hands with any kind of manual labour. I may add that none of the visitors shook hands with us in normal fashion, but performed that method of greeting by shaking together their own hands. This seemed to me to possess advantages, as one thereby escaped having one's hand crushed by those who seem to take a pride in displaying their fervent friendliness or perhaps power of grip or, what is less painful but more unpleasant, encountering a damp, fish-like flapper.

During June, some little time after this trip was concluded, rumours of peace became rife and everything possible was done to prevent them from reaching the ears of the troops, as it was feared that their fighting spirit might suffer—a wise precaution deserving of attention. A little later I was told by a trustworthy Japanese that the men were getting to the end of their tether, and whenever I could escape notice I rode some distance to the railway line in order to judge of the quality of the reinforcements which continued flowing from Japan. It was said that the knowledge of the great losses which the army had suffered had become widespread and that the feeling of the troops was that, though they did not mind passing another winter in Manchuria, they were not at all keen to take part in any more sanguinary battles. From this I was led to deduce that the Japanese, in spite of their victories, lacked the staying power of the meat-eating armies of the West, and that should they suffer several defeats and “lose face” they might not prove to be so dangerous a foe in defence as when on the offensive. I had not forgotten how nerves had seemed to be shaken during the first days of the battle of Liao-yang, which I have already mentioned, and this helped to fortify me in the opinion that I had formed that the yellow men were not invulnerable and were deficient in staying power. I was, however, mistaken, as has been proved during the last decade; but I am sure that the army of 1904-05 was not the equal of that of later days, and that its moral development had not attained to the utter fanaticism of the Japanese soldiers who have been met by our troops in the Second World War.

On the 7th September we heard definitely that there was to be an armistice and that we would return to Japan before very long; and ten days later I left for Mukden, north of which city the attachés had for some time been quartered.

As I still hoped to be able to buy some Russian sabres, I was given one day an interpreter and proceeded with him to the shop of a dealer in that commodity. On our way there I noticed that some longish hairs were protruding from under the back of the cap of my cicerone, and on lifting it up was surprised to see the mark of Manchu servitude, a pigtail, curled on the top of his head. The man grinned and said nothing, but I suspected that he had been employed as a

secret service agent, which accounted for his having grown a Chinese appendage.

Some years later, when Marshal Oyama's former aide-de-camp, Captain Tanaka, came to England with General Nishi, who was head of a mission, I asked him about the methods followed by the Japanese in collecting information during the war in Manchuria. He said that when it became evident that a resort to arms between his country and Russia was probable, the Japanese General Staff began taking the necessary measures. They employed then and during the war Chinamen who, as traders of the nature of packmen, frequented the Russian lines and were in the habit of getting the soldiers to sign their notebooks with recommendations, the result of their having been fairly treated in making purchases. They would thus secure the numbers of regiments in certain localities and other matter useful to the Japanese. As, however, this source of information was found not to be altogether satisfactory, Japanese, disguised as Chinese, were also employed—men who knew the language and resembled the Manchurian type, for there are some who might easily be thought to belong to the Celestial Empire.

As at the time of the Russo-Japanese War the Chinese still wore the pigtail, those chosen to be secret service agents had to grow that appendage. These spies were very successful, so much so that the Russians developed what is known as "spy fever," and sometimes arrested and executed innocent persons. Their alarm was such that they had recourse to the Chinese, and every suspicious Japanese who was disguised as a native was examined by an inhabitant of Manchuria. This was not always successful, so well did the spies play their rôle, but there are differences between the two yellow races, and it was through this fact that the agents came to be identified with certainty. My aide-de-camp friend next told me that there are three ways by which a Japanese may be identified. The first of these is the presence of the marks which are to be found on the feet of those who are in the habit of wearing wooden clogs. Another difference between the males of the two countries is a facial one, associated with the fleshy envelope surrounding the eyes, and this I cannot put into words.

But the third, the real and decisive method used by the



Chinese, who despised their island neighbours and had no scruples in exposing their wives, arose from a habit which the former have of eating the dried seeds of melons as a digestive after a meal, not with their front teeth as one might expect, but with their lips, so as to extract the kernel, which is then eaten. As this was a peculiarity characteristic of the Chinese, of which the Japanese were apparently not aware, dried melon-seeds were given to the suspected spies, and in every case this test led to their detection and sealed their fate.

For a time the explanation of the non-return of the agents was a mystery, but as soon as it became known steps were taken to counter what was happening. It was not, however, found easy to teach prospective spies to perform with their lips an operation to which the Chinese were habituated from their youth.

Before leaving the subject of differences between certain races I will add a few remarks regarding my own knowledge and experiences of some of them. First as concerns the Japanese, I look upon them as the Germans of the Far East, except that the former have a sense of humour which is deficient in the latter or associated with such things as lavatories. I do not think that either nation is distinguished by inventive genius, at any rate as compared with ourselves, though both are adepts at copying whatever strikes them as suited to their characteristics and at developing the ideas of others. Both are in many ways not far from savages and are untruthful and cruel. Both, too, dominate their women-folk, which probably accounts for much of what is evil in them. Several times, though not often, while in Manchuria I detected the Japanese soldiers displaying brutality, two instances of which will suffice as examples of what they are capable of in that connection when they lose their temper. One day near Mukden I caught a soldier who had got hold of the pigtail of a harmless Chinaman and was pulling and jerking him about by this means—a treatment which must have been exceedingly painful. Again, when we were living in a Chinese house, I noticed a Japanese soldier pick up a tiny puppy and for no reason that was perceivable hold it high above his head and then dash it on to the stone pavement of the courtyard and terminate its existence. Unfortunately, I arrived on the scene a moment or two too late to save the life of the poor little thing, and

the man showed no shame when detected. During the war in Manchuria the Japanese were purposely on their best manners, but between them and something devilish there was only a thin veneer. They succeeded, however, in deceiving many who did not look under the surface, and I suppose that it was inevitable that we should treat them diplomatically as a civilised people; but I trust that the Second World War will once for all open the eyes of the Western world and that for years to come the Japanese will be regarded as little removed from savages.

The Prussian officers who were with the Second Army could not be got to understand that far more is to be obtained from a coloured race by just treatment than by bullying, and in vain I pointed out this fact to the Prussian colonel; but bullies the Germans are and always will be.

One rather touching incident, typical of the Chinese, occurred on the morning that I was leaving for Japan. For some time the British attachés had occupied as their quarters the dwellings on one side of a courtyard, while the owner and his family had been turned out by the Japanese billeting officer and were relegated to one room on the other side. The owner looked poor and was ill-clad in the quilted blue cotton garments worn generally in winter by his race. As, however, charity was said to cover a multitude of sins, so in an inverse sense his dirty garments concealed a generous heart and the cleanest of under-linen. I was told that he was obliged to present a dirty appearance or otherwise he would have been fleeced by some rapacious mandarin.

But to return to the day when I left his house, this Chinaman who, despite appearances, may have been fairly wealthy, far from displaying resentment at the inconvenience imposed on him and his family by our occupation of his home, approached me and produced a Japanese five-yen note (ten shillings), which he, through the interpreter, begged me to accept "for my journey"—an old-world gesture which was made, I am sure, in all sincerity, and the recollection of which is as fresh in my memory as if it had not happened forty years ago.

I journeyed southwards and reached Dalny on the 23rd September, and after farewells at Tokio, which included an audience of the Emperor, sailed in company with General Sir Charles Burnett, who had been sent to Manchuria after

the other two generals had departed. Before I left I was given the Second Class of the Sacred Treasure and, with noteworthy expedition, the war medal and clasp for the campaign through which I had just been. The decoration of the Sacred Treasure is, I believe, so named after the insignia without the possession of which no Emperor of Japan may ascend the throne of his country. This insignia comprises the sacred mirror, the sword, and the jewel. As regards the war medal, which was given for the war in Manchuria, I gathered that not only those who had served at the seat of war but others who had performed military duties in Japan received it. This seemed to me to be a wise arrangement, for it was unavoidable that many officers and others who would have preferred to go to the front had been obliged to remain at home in connection with duties associated with the war. The war medal was issued about the date of the termination of hostilities and not many months or even years after it was concluded, such as is generally the case in our own country. I must, however, mention that on the very morning of the coronation of King George V., and that of his successor, I received the medals commemorative of those events.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### RETURN TO ENGLAND.

ON our way to the United States we spent some hours at Honolulu, where the thing that interested me most was the aquarium. Here was a great variety of fish such as is not to be seen in the Zoological Gardens in London or anywhere in the Western hemisphere.

On the 12th November we landed at San Francisco, and while there I went through an experience of an unpleasant nature, which was as follows.

General Burnett had decided to leave for New York by the Overland Limited train on the 14th, and on that date at an early hour I left the hotel where we were staying in order to withdraw from the Yokohama Specie Bank the balance of my account with them. Having completed my business and having some time to spare I walked leisurely along several streets and stopped for a moment outside the establishment of a lapidary, in the window of which was displayed a fine collection of crystals. I then turned round and started to pursue my way to the Palace Hotel, where the general and I were staying. Almost immediately I was accosted by an individual, a tall, well-dressed, burly fellow, who politely asked me if I could direct him to some place in the city. On replying that I could not do so he immediately said that it was so many years since he had been in San Francisco and the place had so greatly changed that he was finding difficulty in making his way about it. As the time was approaching when I had to rejoin the general, for we were leaving in an hour or two, I made as if to move on. Thereupon he said that he imagined that I was an army officer and inquired if I knew Captain Ketchen of the Canadian Militia. When I passed through Winnipeg on the way to Vancouver I had met an officer of that name who had undertaken to obtain for me certain information required for a handbook on Canada

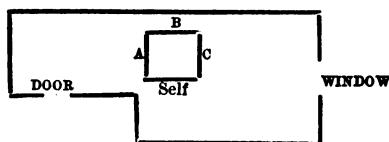
which, as mentioned earlier, I had been compiling for army purposes before leaving for the Russo-Japanese War. I therefore replied that I had met the officer in question, and so a conversation for which I had no particular inclination started. The man, who so far had given me no cause whatever to feel doubts as to his *bona fides*, then went on to say that Ketchen was in San Francisco, having recently returned from Japan, and that he and some friends of his had dined together on the previous evening. It flashed through my mind that, having myself just arrived from that country, which British officers were not allowed to visit during the war, it was strange that I had neither heard nor seen anything of Ketchen. It was, however, possible that I had merely missed him, or that he did not come under the heading of a British officer. The stranger next informed me that he had arranged to meet Ketchen that morning and if, as was possible, I was staying at the Palace Hotel it would not be out of my way to accompany him. I was not anxious to comply with his suggestion, but I did not wish to be discourteous, so I consented to his proposal.

At this point I must mention that as I had left the hotel at an early hour I did not disturb General Burnett, who had the room next to mine, so that he would not know where I had gone. We now walked along a main street through which many people were hurrying to their daily work, and soon halted opposite what looked like the entrance door to an office. Up the stair we went and on arriving at the landing on the first floor my cicerone opened a door and before me I saw, seated at a table, two well-dressed, powerfully built men. They at once rose and invited me to take a seat, and no doubt aware of their rôle the conversation was at once directed to Ketchen, and one of them said that he was momentarily expected. I had by this time begun to feel that all was not well and that I would have to deal with three burly men, any one of whom would not have been easy to tackle.

I was still in doubt whether I was not wrong in the suspicions that ran through my mind, but had I possessed the knowledge of American gangsters which, through the cinematograph, came to us in later years, I should have felt otherwise regarding the three men with whom I was seated, so I sat still and awaited events.

After a few minutes one of the men drew aside a silk handkerchief which was spread over a part of the table and disclosed several piles of ivory counters, and I was invited to take a hand in some card game. All doubts in my mind as to the genuineness of the men at once vanished, and I realised that I had walked into a trap. The next consideration was how to extricate myself from it as quickly as possible.

My train would be leaving shortly and I muttered something about having to catch it, and while doing so reflected on what was to be done. I had no weapon of any kind with which to turn the tables, and my walking-stick was only a light bamboo cane. Three burly ruffians looked much beyond my power to deal with, so they must be outwitted otherwise than by force.



Fortunately my presence of mind at a somewhat critical moment did not desert me, and my brain, stimulated by the unpleasant situation, acted promptly. Two courses were open to me: the first, to hurl at the window the cane-bottomed chair on which I was seated, when the noise of the smashed glass could hardly fail to attract the attention of passers-by. This might, however, lead to my being delayed in San Francisco to give evidence against the gangsters, so I plumped for the other method, keeping in reserve the window-smashing scheme. I must escape by the door, and I thought that I might manage to get hold of the handle and make a bolt before I was seized. I could not, however, be sure whether or not my companion had locked it when we entered the room, but I must take my chance on that score.

These thoughts passed through my mind in a few seconds, during which the cards were being dealt by the man on my right-hand side, whose back was turned towards the sole window of the room. While this was going on I glanced to my left at the door and at the same time unobtrusively pushed back my chair, but only sufficiently so as to be almost out of

reach of the man on my left, who was seated nearest to it and facing the window. Next I extended my left leg, so that, pivoted on my heel, I could swing round and get hold of the door handle.

A moment later, when all at the table except myself were busily arranging their cards, so that their hands were occupied, I was out of my seat and had my right hand on the door handle. It turned easily, and in a flash I was outside on the landing, down the stairs, and into the street. I will not pretend that at that moment my heart was beating as steadily as usual, but that was to be expected. I had the satisfaction of knowing that I had outwitted three gangsters and escaped an unpleasant finale to my visit to San Francisco. No pursuit followed, though I did not turn round to see, and I made haste to the Palace Hotel, whence an hour later the general and I found ourselves on the Overland Limited train. As usual his kindly, forthcoming manner had made him at home with several of our fellow-travellers, to one of whom he introduced me. This was a railroad traffic-manager, who told me several interesting things about his work, and after a time I decided to swallow my pride and relate my experience of the morning, of which I felt ashamed. But he gave me comfort, for he said such incidents were not uncommon in the States, where card-sharpers and others of their kidney flourished. In any case it was, he pointed out, advisable, even at the risk of being discourteous, to avoid being drawn into conversation with strangers; and he gave me several instances of how his fellow-countrymen had been caught in the toils of crooks in somewhat the same manner as I had nearly been. Traps were carefully contrived, sometimes months ahead, and in my case he thought that a note had been made for future use by the conspirators of my journey to Japan and return to San Francisco. I admit that what he said sounded rather far-fetched, but he assured me that such was not the case. Lastly, he congratulated me on having done the only thing that could have got me out of the scrape without using force. Had I been held in that room I should have been rifled of my money, ticket, valuables; my clothes would have been taken from me, and I would have been left tied up and gagged while my captors made off.

As in my heavy baggage I had several articles of a war-

like nature which I did not wish the customs authorities to find if it was examined, I booked it through to New York, having ascertained that it would be there before we sailed for Liverpool. However it only arrived twelve hours before we did, and on landing at home we were exempted from examination. I may mention that a couple of days after reaching London, when I was crossing Pall Mall to the War Office from Winchester House, St James's Square, where the Intelligence Branch was situated, having in my hands a Russian shell and a couple of live hand-grenades, I narrowly escaped falling on the wet, slippery wooden pavement. I had brought these articles home at some inconvenience, as I hoped that the ordnance department might examine them and prepare something of their nature for possible future use in our army. I need hardly say that I never again heard of these grenades, nor were any steps taken by the War Department to produce anything resembling them until many months after the Great War broke out.

But I have outstripped my story and must return to America. After leaving San Francisco we went to Washington, where one of the United States officers who had been attached to the Japanese Army took us to lunch at the Chevy Chase Club, why so called I cannot say. There we met several American officers past and present, and among the former was a General Gilmour, who told me that he had been present at the first battle of Bull Run. Some of the officers with whom I spoke deplored the vulgarity of their Press and said that the pronunciation of the English language in the United States was getting more like the way it was spoken in Great Britain, but I cannot say that the change was observable.

While at New York it was arranged for the general and I to visit West Point, and at the station we were met by Colonel Howze, Captain Koe, and a mounted escort. After lunch we made a tour of the halls of study, and what most struck me was that the instruction seemed to be neither practical nor such as would be required by those about to become officers in the army. However, as many of the students must have joined the establishment with very little knowledge I supposed that it was considered necessary to start them all from the very rudiments. The discipline was extremely strict and in some points meticulously so, and that again was no doubt



important, considering the various strata from which the students were drawn.

Having secured berths on the Cunard liner *Caronia*, a new vessel of 20,000 tons, we sailed on the 25th. On board I was interested to find Mr Lancaster, who was purser and had held that office on the *Bothnia*, in which vessel I went to India for the first time. The effect of this meeting was that soon after we were outside the Hudson River the general and I were shifted to much better quarters than the Government allowance for our passages had permitted me to book.

The voyage home provided no incident worth recording, and on arriving at Liverpool we learned that a change of Government was shortly expected to take place. The effect of this would be that the Liberal Party would come into power, in which event there was a possibility that Sir William Nicholson, who was on half-pay and had not taken up his appointment at Gibraltar, might be appointed to the Army Council. On the morning after I reached London he told me that my cousin, R. B. Haldane, was to become Secretary of State for War. I said nothing, but went to his chambers in Lincoln's Inn, which resulted in Nicholson being made Quartermaster-General. A day or two later, when dining with my relative, he told me that he had chosen Nicholson entirely on my recommendation, for he knew him only slightly through having met him when dining with me some years earlier. He had no cause to regret the choice, neither had the general, for before long he became Field-Marshal and a Peer of the Realm.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### AT THE INTELLIGENCE BRANCH, WAR OFFICE.

WHEN I left Japan I was aware that I had been recalled in order to undertake the writing of the history of the war in Manchuria, and on arrival I was informed that the work was to begin at the New Year. The material at my disposal, especially regarding the share of the Russians, was quite inadequate for the purpose of compiling an account of any military value. My own reports, so far as they went, had been prepared in the form of a history and, with numerous additions, would suffice. Those, however, which emanated from the attachés with the First Japanese Army would be of little or no value for historical purposes and were like the vapourings of newspaper correspondents. Bricks without straw was the prospect before me, but the task would grow easier as time went on and channels of information were opened.

On the 11th January 1906 I got a useful step upwards when I was made brevet-colonel; and on the following day, at the desire of Sir John French, who was General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Aldershot Command, I delivered a lecture there entitled "Some Lessons from the Russo-Japanese War." Thirty-six years later I was interested to read in a newspaper certain remarks from one who seemed to have been among the audience on that occasion to the effect that what I had stated at Aldershot had proved to be true during the operations in the Far East of the Second Great War.

Three months after I had come home, General Sir James Grierson, who was head of the Intelligence and Operations Branch of the War Office, offered me the appointment of Assistant Director of Military Operations in succession to Colonel William Robertson. This I accepted, but was told that the post would not be vacant for six months, by which

time I expected to have broken the back of the history on which I was engaged.

I have said little regarding social affairs in what I have written as I did not intend that this autobiography should be a mere record of such transitory matters. Exceptions there might be and I am about to mention one. On the 10th May—we are still in 1906—at a dance at Lady Granby's in Arlington Street, Lady Marjorie Manners, whom I knew, presented me to H.R.H. Princess Ena of Battenberg, a pretty girl dressed in pink muslin, and desired me to start the first dance with her. I prepared to do so, but my royal partner, whose last dance it was to be in England for some time, confessed to feeling shy at having to lead off. I replied that I was in a like predicament, but that we must harden our hearts and obey orders. Soon we were whirling round the room, for those were the days of waltzes and not two-steps, and the Princess danced exceedingly well. Amongst other things she told me that she would soon be starting to go to Spain for her marriage. Her fiancé was the next subject of conversation, and she said, as I had heard, that he was keen on anything British and had a passion for horses. This was followed by a discussion on bull-fights and her dread at the thought of having to be present, with the eyes of all present glued on her to see how she was enjoying the favourite sport of the Spaniards. I mentioned that some years earlier I had been a spectator at one of these exhibitions and what I went through during the horse massacre with which it opened. The next time I met her was at an evening party in London in 1935, nearly thirty years later, when her style of life had greatly changed. We talked of our earlier meeting, and in spite of the years that had passed and all she had gone through she looked little changed.

But to turn to a very different subject. I have always favoured compulsory service for the Army—the only fair method of distributing an obligation in which every able-bodied man ought to be proud to share—and I do not agree with those who maintain that a voluntary soldier is worth many conscripts. I have seen active service with both types and in all sorts of conditions and I have not noticed the slightest difference between them. When we returned from Japan I urged General Nicholson to cause to be drafted a bill for

introducing compulsory service, so that in the event of a war, such as that in South Africa, the Secretary of State for War, when the nation might be in a mood to accept the principle of compulsion, would be in a position to lay it before the House of Commons. When Sir William spoke to my cousin about it, although not long before he had made a speech in which he opposed what he termed "dragooning men to serve," he gave his consent to the drafting of such a bill. His view was that the adoption of such a measure would be like changing horses in the middle of a stream and that for ten years its introduction would lay the country open to unjustifiable risks.

Other arguments, with some of which Nicholson did not agree, were advanced, but to these I need not refer. In the end a certain kind of bill was drafted, but we continued to live over a powder-mine till Mr Hore-Belisha grasped the nettle and compulsion came, I hope to stay in some form or other, if only for the well-being of the young men of the nation. My relative and many others would seem to have had erroneous ideas regarding compulsory service, for, as Sir George Trevelyan states in 'English Social History,' "It was only during the long period of peace and safety after Waterloo that men began to regard it as part of English liberty not to be trained for defence. In all previous ages the opposite and more rational idea prevailed."

While my cousin was at the War Office he always invited me to the annual official dinner, which it was customary for Cabinet Ministers to give on the King's birthday. On the 29th June 1905, the first year he held office, I went in levée dress to the Ritz Hotel, where the dinner took place, and found myself sitting next Baron Campbell von Laurentz, who had taken part in the famous cavalry charge led by General von Bredow at the battle of Mars la Tour in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Campbell von Laurentz was a German-Scot, unquestionably pro-German, who had settled at Windsor. He came to the dinner in his striking white cuirassier uniform, and when it was over we adjourned to the Prime Minister's reception at the Foreign Office. At the top of the grand staircase stood Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, with whom I had a brief conversation, and, probably because I was in Highland dress, he began relating a story of a bishop who

at Perth station, through his wearing an apron, was mistaken for a Highlander in mourning.

In Teutonic fashion my baron friend had imbibed more champagne at the dinner than he could carry with outward decorum, and only with difficulty did I manage to get him to the top of the stairs; but he got safely through the rest of the evening till the time came for departure, when I was relieved to get him deposited in a cab which took him to his lodging.

A fortnight after the birthday dinner I was at Panshanger in Hertfordshire, where one of the guests was Mr Arthur Balfour, and one evening the subject was led to my experiences in the South African War and he asked me to tell him about my escape from Pretoria. When that, to me threadbare, subject was exhausted he talked on army matters and the impossibility of applying compulsion to our land forces owing to the fact that we had sometimes to fight our battles in distant countries, which required that our men should be enlisted on a voluntary basis. I reminded him that Japan, with an army raised by conscription, had during the war with Russia transported by sea many hundreds of thousands of troops to the seat of conflict and that what she could do was not beyond our power in similar conditions. But he did not agree and said that it was largely a question of distance, and the distance between Japan and Manchuria was much less than that between the United Kingdom and South Africa. It was not for me to argue with so brilliant a man as the late Prime Minister, but it seemed to me that what he asserted was not altogether logical.

In the following month I was a guest at a farewell dinner which was given in honour of Count von der Schulenberg, the German military attaché, who was returning home on completion of his term at the embassy. Count Paul Metternich, who was then German ambassador, was the principal person present at the party, and after dinner expended a full hour in trying to convince me that there were no reasons for the ill-feeling that prevailed between his country and the United Kingdom. He held that the responsibility lay at the door of the latter, and argued that even if her ambition lay that way Germany could not deprive us of our colonies and that her fleet would continue to be fourth in order among the navies

of the world. He made a strong point of the fact that during the war in South Africa the French nation had been far freer in their abuse of England than any other neutral country, and he evidently felt that the Germans expected us to be grateful for their restraint.

At this point I reminded him that the British were naturally sensitive regarding the question of sea-power and would never tolerate a rival on that element, and that if there were ill-feeling it arose from that cause. As the ambassador knew that the Secretary of State for War and I were relations it was easy to guess why he had wasted so much powder on me, for wasted it was, since the subject of the conversation went no further than a sitting-room at the Ritz Hotel.

In the autumn of 1905 I had my first experience of deer-stalking at Killilan in Ross-shire, but I was not very successful, mainly through lack of experience and because I was using a borrowed rifle. During the first two days I did much walking without getting a chance, but on the third day I fairly disgraced myself by wounding in both haunches an old stag. I must preface what I am about to say that this mishap was not entirely my fault but that of the stalker, who up till a short time before the day of the catastrophe had been a shepherd and had not had the same experience as a man who had stalked from his youth.

After a long stalk and a lengthy crawl through peat-bogs and other obstacles we arrived at shooting distance from the beast, which was standing almost stern on towards us at an awkward angle. Indeed I was convinced that I could not from where I lay send a bullet behind his shoulder and into a vital part. But the stalker whispered in my ear that not a moment was to be lost or the animal might scent danger and be off. I therefore hardened my heart and at what seemed an impossible angle pressed the trigger. The unfortunate animal only moved sufficiently to offer a similarly difficult shot at the other shoulder. Urged more than ever by my panting neighbour, who seemed to me to have appropriated a better position than he had left me, I let off a second time and the stricken beast fell to the ground. When we came up to him I was horrified, though not surprised, to see the result of my target practice. But the mischief could not be remedied, and with my tail between my legs I started to walk

home, where I described what had happened, fully expecting to be reprimanded by my host and end all prospects of deer-stalking at his forest. But my host, who was the kindest of men, burst into roars of laughter, sent a bottle of champagne to me in the bathroom, and later advised me when on the same beat of the forest to use my own judgment. I was particularly annoyed at my exploit, for though I do not pretend to be anything of a shot with a gun, I can generally hold my own with a rifle.

On my return south I was spending a week-end at Givons, near Dorking, with Mr and Mrs Sturgess, she being the daughter of Mr George Meredith, whom I met for the first time. After lunch I was sitting on the verandah with the famous novelist when a luxurious-looking motor-car came up the drive and stopped a little short of us. A smart-looking footman opened the door and there stepped out and approached us a tall, stout, handsomely attired lady of the type that used to be known as "a fine woman." As I rose to meet her, Meredith looked up and I heard him declaim, his eyes bent on the new-comer, in words which recalled the grandiloquent style of some of his novels, "And who is this fair lady with the eyes that welcome yet command?"

As at the period when I was employed at the Intelligence Branch a certain sum of money was allotted in the Army Estimates to cover expenses incurred by officers of the branch when visiting the foreign countries with which their work was concerned, my friend, J. E. Edmonds of the Royal Engineers—recognisable as Archimedes in the Press—who was a colleague at the War Office and later was G.S.O. 1 of the 4th Division, a brigade of which I commanded, and I arranged to make a tour that would include Russia and other countries adjacent. Taking with us the Foreign Office bag and a specially bound Army List for the Czar, we reached St Petersburg—as it was then called—one day in mid-winter.

Although at this time there were said to be disturbances of a revolutionary nature at the capital, we saw no signs of them as we drove through the snow-bound streets. A few hours after our arrival we went to the British embassy and delivered the bag and Army List, and I had a talk with Sir Arthur Nicolson (later Lord Carnock), whom I had met at Clondeboye a number of years earlier.

We were fortunate to be able to see most of the sights of a capital which has twice changed its name since I was there, and in doing so were much helped by Colonel Guy Wyndham, whose elder and better-known brother George was at Sandhurst at the same time as I. The collection of paintings at the Hermitage, the Kazan Cathedral, the carriage museum, and such relics as remained of Peter the Great were interesting, more particularly so of the famous Czar, for I knew that my great-great-grandfather, Colonel James Haldane, while serving in the Life Guards, had been appointed in 1716 to be resident—probably military—attaché at “Musco,” as stated in the commission which, signed by King George I., has disappeared from among the Gleneagles charters.

One evening we went to the opera-house to see Tchaikovsky's ‘*Evgenie Ugenin*.’ Although the Czar was not present, for he was then living at Tsarkoe Selo, it was said for fear of assassination, two gigantic Cossacks with drawn swords stood on guard in the passage outside the Imperial box. When after the performance we were in the street outside the building Edmonds inquired from a tall police officer which was the way to the Hotel de l'Europe. He made no reply, but called up a drosky and ushered us into it, directing the driver where to take us. The peremptory manner in which he dealt with the situation made us conclude that as St Petersburg was then in a disturbed condition he considered that it was not safe for two foreigners to be in the streets after dark.

As I had been given several letters of introduction by friends at the Russian embassy in London we made calls each afternoon and had tea with a charming old lady, Princess Rudolph Obolensky, who lived at 10 Quai de la Cour, on the left bank of the Neva, which, being winter, was hard frozen.

One day Wyndham took us to a sitting of the Duma in the Tauride Palace, and on another to a séance of the court-martial on General Stössel, who had surrendered Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese War, a dereliction of duty for which he was cashiered.

From St Petersburg we proceeded to Moscow, and on to Sevastopol, where we stayed at Kist's Hotel. We travelled with a Russian gentleman who spoke English fluently and, in the absence of any of his compatriots in the sleeping-car, talked freely about his country and told us many interesting



things about the state of affairs in the Czar's vast territories. I have forgotten most of what he said, but one remark remains in my memory. This was that in Russia nothing was permitted ; everything was either laid down or forbidden. I have no reason to suppose that what he said was not the case, but so far as we travellers were concerned there seemed to be no restrictions whatever. On the day of our arrival at the great Black Sea port we hired a victoria and made a tour of the battlefields of the Crimean War. We were advised to carry revolvers, as there were said to be brigands who, once outside the city, might molest us. Near the Redan, at which so much hard fighting had taken place, I picked up the lid of a pipe-clay tin which bore the stamp of Cairns, London, and I also happened on bullets and fragments of shells. In another field, which had evidently not been subjected to the plough, were quantities of broken beer bottles, reminiscent of the British Army of half a century earlier.

On our way back to the hotel we stopped at the cemetery on Cathcart's Hill, where I noticed tombstones which had been erected to two men of my regiment—James Dunsmuir and James M'Donald, both dated 24th November 1855. There was also a stone to Captain Hon. G. C. C. Eliot, Coldstream Guards, an elder brother of the Lord St Germans with whom I used to shoot when quartered at Devonport. He fell at Inkerman, and his jacket, stained with blood, must have been sent home, for I remembered having seen it in a glass-topped case at Port Eliot.

On the 25th February we sailed from Sevastopol and next day entered the Bosphorus and on to Constantinople, where we stayed at the Pera Palace Hotel, which was indifferent and expensive.

On calling at the embassy one of the secretaries told us that we had arrived rather late if we wished to be present at the Salamlik, which would take place in two days, but that he would do what he could to get tickets. He succeeded in doing so, and we were able to see a ceremony which died out with the termination of the era of Sultans.

We had been directed to be at the embassy at 10.45 on the 28th wearing, in default of frock-coats, our fur coats, which fortunately were of dark colour. Tall hats were a difficulty, but we managed to hire them, though mine required much

writing-paper stuffed under the lining before I could get it to stay on my head. Lord Dalhousie's brother, Patrick W. Maule Ramsay, the helpful secretary, drove us to near Yildiz Kiosk, and we were posted on a raised terrace in front of a house which provided a favourable point of view of the ceremony. Several unmistakable detectives were hanging about, and as the day was warm and sunny our heavy-looking outer garments drew attention, for they probably supposed that beneath them there were cameras—which are forbidden—or something else also used for shooting.

Presently enormously stout Cabinet Ministers began arriving in carriages, and these were followed by pretty ladies of the seraglio (some with little boys) who through their apology for veils cast glad eyes around. The streets were lined with infantrymen, and there were also present two cavalry regiments armed with lances, one regiment being mounted on grey horses. Many of the officers looked to be not less than fifty years of age and some were exceedingly stout.

As the appointed hour for the arrival of the Sultan drew near the sightseers were lined up on the terrace, a trumpet sounded, the infantry presented arms, and in a small victoria came Abdul Hamid, opposite whom sat his War Minister. The potentate appeared to have his hair dyed dark red, and had a small beard and a very large nose. We raised our hats, and he returned the salute and, arriving at the mosque, he descended from his carriage and slowly mounted the steps of the edifice.

During the service in the building the troops were given biscuits and sugar. While the former were being distributed I noticed to my amusement a Turkish officer who greedily pocketed as many of them as he could, and what he could not wrap up in a handkerchief he stuffed into the hood of his orderly's greatcoat.

When the Sultan emerged from the mosque he re-entered his carriage, took the reins and drove up the hill to the palace, followed by his ladies, one of whom had discarded her veil and stared at the spectators.

In the afternoon we left Constantinople and, stopping a night at Budapest, reached Vienna on 1st March. In the evening we went to the Carl Theater to see Oscar Straus's 'Ein Waltzer Traum,' which later on was played in London

by Lily Elsie. In the English version there was omitted a character, a Prussian officer, who with his way of barking out his sentences, purposely exaggerated, convulsed the audience with laughter. As it would not have been possible to reproduce his rôle on the English stage the play suffered, and though the music was delightful it was not popular, like 'The Dollar Princess,' in which that beautiful actress took the leading part.

From Vienna, where Prince Adolphus of Teck and his charming wife, and the ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen, whom I had met when staying at Campsea Ashe, were most kind and hospitable, we went next to Brünn in order to visit the battlefield of Austerlitz, and then on to Königgrätz, another spot well known by name to soldiers.

In the following autumn I went to the German Kaiser Manœuvres in Lorraine, and the impression I took away from what I saw was that if we had to fight the German Army we might expect it to continue to follow its antiquated attack formations, and very costly they would prove to be; for in spite of what their attachés had seen in South Africa and Manchuria the lessons had not been taken to heart.

Shortly before these Manœuvres began I stayed for a few days with a retired officer of the German Guard Corps, who was a connection of an American friend with whom I was travelling. His castle was not far from Baden and was situated near the Rhine, and it was said to be haunted. The story went that an unfaithful wife and her infant had been murdered and their remains hidden under the floor of the drawing-room, which did not sound exactly sanitary. After nightfall a ghost was stated to frequent parts of the castle, which was gloomy enough to harbour numerous spirits; but I did not have the pleasure of encountering any of them during my stay.

With the party was an American, who I do not think can have had much previous experience of shooting birds on the wing. He would sometimes drop on a knee to shoot, and if he managed to score a hit one would hear him exclaim proudly, "My Gord! Did you see that?"

The dogs which my host possessed—he was not a Prussian—interested me greatly, and I have never before or since come across their like. They were a cross between the retriever

and the poodle, and were equally efficient whether on land or in water. The presence of a bird on the ground was instantly detected; and should one by chance be hit and fly away wounded with a leg hanging down, the keen-eyed animals would race after it, heads in the air, and having noted where it alighted, retrieve it.

One day the dogs showed that they were as expert at flushing ducks along the swampy banks of the river, and when the birds fell to the guns they would be picked up as they were carried down-stream by the swift current.

The keepers and their assistants were dressed in green-coloured garments, which seems to be the recognised colour for sportsmen in the Fatherland, and on arriving at the table set out with lunch we were greeted with a salute on brass instruments; while at the end of the day's sport, after the bag had been counted and read out, the staff would raise their hats and utter in unison the words *Weidmann Heil*, to which the guns would respond with *Weidmann Dank*. After this exchange of courtesies, which was preceded by the blowing of trumpets, we would march back to the castle, the staff shouldering the game, while the villagers watched the procession with a respectful demeanour.

About this time my sisters and I suffered a great loss through the death of our mother, who died on the afternoon of the day on which I returned from Germany.

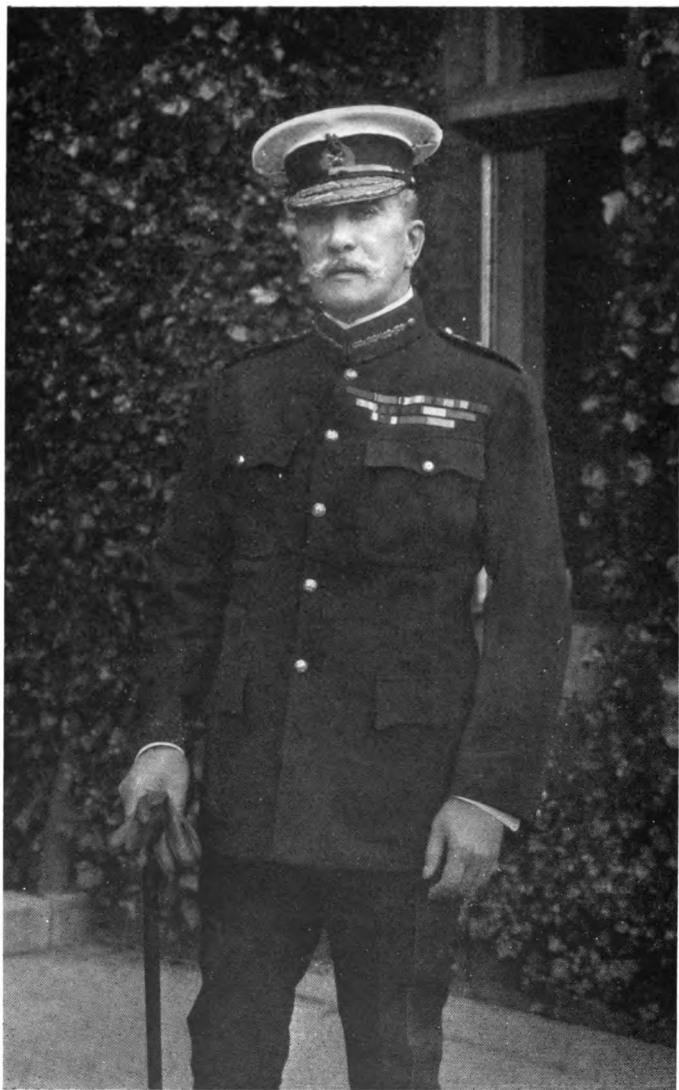
## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### AT THE EASTERN COMMAND.

IN the autumn of 1909 I was attached for a few weeks during the training and manœuvre period to the staff of General Sir Arthur Paget, who commanded the Eastern Command. At that time there was a prospect of my succeeding his senior General Staff officer, T. d'O. Snow, a Staff College friend, who was about to get command of an infantry brigade. Soon after the appointment in question was confirmed by the Selection Board and in October I took up my duties. A day or two later the general came to his office in the Horse Guards and he seemed to be suffering from some annoyance. I soon ascertained that his equilibrium was upset by some criticisms which had appeared in the newspapers regarding the way in which he had conducted the side he commanded at the manœuvres; but I felt that what was wrong was that he missed my predecessor and had doubts how I might fill his place. I therefore asked him to let me have a few days during which I could familiarise myself with my new surroundings, when I felt confident that everything would go smoothly.

A day or two later I had to prepare a report on the Territorial Army, its possible value, and how soon after a declaration of war it might be expected to be fit to take the field alongside the regular troops. Beyond a general knowledge of the lines of my cousin's great military experiment I had little to go upon. I had seen in Manchuria reinforcements which had had only a brief period of training, and I remembered what had been achieved by Alsager Pollock some years earlier in the rapid instruction of the "Spectator Company." I realised that once war had broken out everyone would work with far greater energy and keenness than in peace-time, and that that would help to abbreviate the term of training necessary to turn out the semi-finished article. On this somewhat sketchy basis I prepared the required report, which,





General Sir Arthur Paget.

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after approval and signature by the general, found its way to the War Office. Next day he said that he was going to Cannes for several weeks, where his mother, Lady Alfred Paget, was in the habit of passing some months each winter, and, except that I kept him informed from time to time of how matters at command headquarters were progressing, I saw nothing of him nor did I hear from him for some weeks. During the two years I acted as his chief General Staff officer I believe that he placed complete confidence in me and everything in the command went smoothly.

Sir Arthur was a natural soldier, and he certainly looked the part. He was no office man and, like Sir William Lockhart, expected his staff to be competent to settle without troubling him many matters such as arise in an important command. He was the antithesis of that type of senior officer—not uncommon in our army—who insists on doing everything himself, whether from mistrust or wish to have the whole credit I am unable to say, but who effectually cramps initiative in staff and subordinate commanders. I do not wish it to be understood that Sir Arthur was as progressive as a younger man or as open to fresh ideas, and, as I soon discovered, he was bound a good deal by his experiences in the South African War, so much so that I found that the less I referred to my own in Manchuria the better would our relations be. He was essentially an infantry soldier and put no faith in the shock tactics of cavalry or the *blanche arme*. Here I was in entire agreement with him; and had more of his kind had commands in the Great War, in which we suffered grievously from an excess of cavalry leaders, some of whom were ignorant of the less rapidly moving arm of the service, it would have been to the advantage of the army in France and Flanders.

One of Sir Arthur's greatest assets was his loyalty to his staff, which was repaid by their devotion and loyalty to him. There were some officers who did not look beneath the surface and regarded him as an ignorant soldier who owed his rise to the fact that he was a guardsman and a friend of King Edward. They were mistaken, as men like David Henderson, Archibald Murray, and Snow, all of whom had served as his senior General Staff officer, knew. And here I must mention a story which is typical of the general and a good example of his presence of mind and readiness to escape being cornered.



It occurred when he was commanding a division at Aldershot and had returned from leave immediately before one of Sir John French's staff exercises took place.

What is known as an "appreciation" had been sent to the headquarters of the command, and at a conference Sir John floored the divisional commander by putting some question on it, an answer to which was not immediately forthcoming. Sir Arthur reflected for a moment and then announced that the appreciation had been drawn up with great care, but for the moment he could not recall the particular point to which Sir John referred. Then turning to Murray, his senior General Staff officer, he said with a lordly air, "Refresh my memory, Murray, refresh my memory," and all was well. There were many other stories about Sir Arthur, as will always be the case where men of character and personality are concerned.

Through being his staff officer I gained one of my most valued friends in his sister Amy, who was then living with her mother at their London house in Queen Anne's Street, where it happened my great-grandfather was born. For many years after the Great War I spent a good part of the winter at her charming Château de Garibondy on the outskirts of Cannes, where she and her younger sister, Lady Colebrooke, remained after war broke out in 1939, braving the discomforts and at one period the dangers in that part of France not at first occupied by the Germans. Indeed, at the time that the troops of our army and the United States were invading Italy and her château came under artillery fire from naval vessels and was damaged, she was obliged to spend eight days and nights in the tunnel beneath her property which carries the railway line to Grasse.

Miss Paget was remarkable for her sagacity, clear-sightedness and strength of character, and, as someone said, she was "a great gentleman." She possessed a marvellous faculty for "sizing up" people, and I have never known her wrong in her estimate of them, for she was what is called a "thinker."

I found the change to the Eastern Command interesting, and when accompanying my chief to inspections got into touch again to some extent with troops, and soon had an intimate acquaintance with the southern and south-eastern counties of England.

While at the War Office I had, when reading Holland Rose's 'Life of Napoleon,' come upon a passage which described the steps that had been taken at a time when a French descent was feared; and the War Office librarian had borrowed from the Record Office the original compilation on the subject, prepared by General Dundas, then Commander-in-Chief. Based on this I had written a memorandum in which I pointed out what was desirable to frustrate such a design on the part of the Germans, which there was some reason to suspect. It met with approval, but hearing no more of it I supposed that, like other effusions, it had found its way into a pigeon-hole, where it would remain undisturbed for all time. I was, however, to find that I was mistaken; for almost the first paper, outside the routine of the office, that I found on my table at the Horse Guards was the memorandum in question. It had arrived from the War Office with instructions to elaborate the scheme which I had outlined many months earlier, and I had now to endeavour to practise what I had preached. After reflection I arranged through the Home Office to summon to Eastern Command headquarters the chief constables of all the counties concerned, and to them I explained what was required and gave them data of what would have to be done in their respective areas to ensure that a workable plan was ready for application when circumstances arose.

Among other things they undertook to ascertain the number of vehicles, horses, cattle, sheep, and supplies normally to be found in their counties and arrange for their systematic and gradual withdrawal before the invader could lay hands on them. A special matter was to avoid allowing certain roads to become blocked by fleeing inhabitants and that of obstructing others by military means.

After a few meetings the steps that had so far been taken were communicated to the War Office, the results of which could not be known for some time. Here ended my association with the scheme; but I believe when the Great War broke out it was perfected, though it had not to be put in force.

On the 11th May I accompanied Sir Arthur Paget to Dover, where he went to meet the King of Portugal, who had landed there to be present at the funeral of King Edward VII.; and next day we went on a similar errand to Port Victoria to receive

the Kaiser, who had arrived on board the *Hohenzollern*. He was wearing plain clothes and, like most German officers in mufti, did not look nearly so imposing as when I had last seen him at the manoeuvres in Lorraine. I was presented to the monarch by Sir Arthur, who explained my relationship to the Secretary of State for War, whom the Kaiser knew well. He shook hands warmly with me, but said nothing ; and General von Plessen—a fine-looking soldier—offered me a cigar, which I accepted, and we had some conversation. We all travelled on a special train, and on arriving at Victoria the Kaiser was met by King George, and the monarchs kissed each other.

Early in the following year, after returning from Switzerland, where I went annually for ski-ing, Sir Arthur told me that he had a good prospect of succeeding to the Aldershot Command on the termination of his present appointment, and he asked me to accompany him there. I was then anxious to get command of a brigade, as I had not served with troops since the war in South Africa, but as it would have been ungracious to refuse I felt obliged to consent. As matters turned out, he did not go to Aldershot but to Ireland.

At the time of the coronation of King George V. I was attached to General Nogi, who was the military representative of Japan with Prince and Princess Higashi Fushimi. We were lodged in Seaford House, Belgrave Square, where I went on the 19th June. The ten days during which I was with the Japanese visitors were about as strenuous as any I remember to have passed in peace-time. The whole work fell on my shoulders, which was probably the best arrangement, as it would have been difficult to subdivide the various duties, and it was essential that everything should run smoothly.

Besides looking after the royalties, programmes for General Nogi and Admiral Togo and the suite had to be arranged and the Prince and Princess delivered at the various functions to which they were invited, when the Lord-in-Waiting, Lord Colebrooke, took charge of them. Fortunately, like all Japanese, who are given to arrive at least a quarter of an hour before they are expected, the royal couple were patterns of punctuality and reminded me of children waiting anxiously to be taken to a party. The admiral and general were charming veterans

and gave no trouble whatever, but only the former, like the royalties, talked English.

Amongst the places to which I took the two former—and this proved to be a happy inspiration—was the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The governor at this time was my old colonel, Field-Marshal Sir George White, who was unfortunately ill and unable to be present to receive his guests, but in his absence Lady White did the honours. The distinguished visitors were taken round the quarters of the pensioners and were interested to see some nonagenarian veterans who had fought in the Crimean War. General Nogi, to whom I pointed out the picture of Sergeant Ewart of the Scots Greys in the chapel depicting him capturing at Waterloo the eagle of the 45th French Regiment, was greatly interested and asked me for details of the incident. The day following their visit they sent to each pensioner a pipe and an ounce of tobacco; and General Nogi remarked to me that he regretted that in Japan there was, for old soldiers, no such institution such as they had seen.

When I recall these two distinguished representatives of the Japanese Army and Navy I cannot help feeling that the brutality displayed by the yellow Huns in the Second World War owed itself in some measure to the white breed in the West with whom they became allied, but for whom, when I was in Manchuria, there was anything but liking.

I must mention that of all the entertainments to which I accompanied the Japanese party that which General Nogi least enjoyed was the gala performance at the Opera House, Covent Garden, at which Madame Tetrazzini sang. After it was over I asked him what he thought of it, and, knowing how great is the difference between the music of the East and the West, I was not surprised when he replied that it sounded to him like the noise a pig might make if it were being skinned alive.

In August the outlook on the continent of Europe looked threatening, and on the 17th of that month a widespread railway strike began at home. According to my practice I kept a careful record of everything that was done at the Eastern Command in connection therewith, so that should a similar crisis occur in years to come whoever was then in command should have a guide as to the steps to be taken.

These included a knowledge of the various supply depots, termini of the railways, and many other places which would have to be guarded and which could only be learned by practical experience and might demand instant action to prevent a catastrophe. During the same month there was a drought in the eastern counties, which afforded an excellent excuse for cancelling the Autumn Manœuvres, for in view of the unsettled state of Europe, thanks to Germany, it was inadvisable to hold them in case it should become necessary to mobilise the Army. Anxiety continued, and on the 23rd Sir William Nicholson, who was Chief of the Imperial General Staff and who had been dining with my cousin on the previous evening, mentioned to me that the Prime Minister had also been there. Just before midnight Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, had arrived, and a discussion had taken place as to the action the Government should take were Germany and France to come to blows. Some time earlier, realising that we were on the brink of hostilities in which we were certain to be involved, I had ordered the uniform and equipment necessary for a campaign on the Continent, but they were not to be required for a couple of years.

On the 11th November I accompanied Sir Arthur Paget to Victoria Station to be present at the departure for India of King George and Queen Mary. When the general presented me to the King, whom I had not before met, he inquired if I were a relative of Lord Haldane, and talked about my regiment which, as a young naval officer, he had known at Malta twenty-five years earlier.

The same month I happened to be spending a week-end with Sir Alfred and Lady Scott-Gatty at Welwyn, where Bernard Shaw had come to lunch. After that meal we adjourned to the drawing-room, and Lady Scott-Gatty asked her niece, the younger daughter of Albert Vickers, to play something on the piano. I do not pretend to know much about that instrument, though, like many of my contemporaries, I learned to strum in my youth, as I have already mentioned. However, the young lady was a performer above the average, and when she had finished, Shaw, instead of remaining silent or paying her a compliment, turned to her and said in an incisive manner, "Get a pianola, get a pianola!"—a remark which was not only unkind but undeserved and verging on rudeness.

I met this brilliantly clever but extraordinary Irishman on several occasions and felt that a diet of meat and not vegetables, which he favoured, might have improved him. Once when dining with Lord Haldane he told me that he had just read the manuscript of Lawrence of Arabia's book and he asked me what I thought of the author, who seemed to be a puzzle to him. I said that I only knew him slightly and hesitated to give an opinion, but that he seemed to me to have something of the poser about him. Shaw replied that I had hit the nail on the head in what I said; but I could not help thinking that before me was a far greater poser than Lawrence. The last time I met Shaw was at Welwyn, when he told me how he came to write his play of Joan of Arc, and very interesting he was; but I felt at the time that he quite expected that future generations would regard him in much the same way as Shakespeare is looked on by the present one.

On 27th February I was made a Knight of Grace of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in return for having carried out some negotiations between that Order and the Red Cross, who were at issue regarding a matter affecting the Territorial Army. I had always had a desire to be a member of that ancient Order, as I understood that one of my distant forebears, Maldwyn de Levenax (Lennox), had been "crossed" in one of the crusades, in token of which one of the Haldane quarterings in their coat-of-arms is *argent*, a saltire between two roses *gules*.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### COMMAND OF THE 10TH INFANTRY BRIGADE.

My period as brigadier-general at the Horse Guards was drawing to a close, and my chief, Sir Arthur Paget, had already left to assume command in Ireland. He was replaced by General Sir James Grierson, an old friend, according to whom in order to be an officer *sans peur et sans reproche* one must be a Scot, a gunner, and unmarried. As I fulfilled two out of three of these qualifications and had served twenty-three years in a Highland regiment we always got on well together ; and I was glad to know that on going to Shorncliffe to command the 10th Infantry Brigade I should still be under his command. I had served too long on the staff and I looked forward to being once again with troops as I aspired, like Achilles of old, to be not only "great in the council" but "glorious in the field."

Before I left for that station I saw my cousin, who had returned from paying a visit to Berlin. I inquired, if it were not a secret, what success he had achieved during his conversations with the Kaiser, Tirpitz and others, and he replied that he had been able to put a stone in the foundations of better relations with Germany. As I had no faith in the sincerity of that country I said that I hoped that the stone would not prove to be a brick—a remark which drew no response from him. I then asked him if he had not found it difficult to discuss in a foreign tongue matters of a technical nature. To this he responded that that had presented no difficulty, for his legal training made it easy for him to avoid pitfalls.

When I took command of the troops at Shorncliffe the 10th Infantry Brigade consisted of the 2nd King's Royal Rifles—soon after replaced by the 1st Royal Warwickshire Regiment, once known as Guise's Regiment, and commanded for a time, after he left the Life Guards, by my great-great-







Brig.-General A. Haldane, at York, 17th August 1914.

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grandfather, Colonel James Haldane—the 2nd Seaforth Highlanders, the 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, and the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who were stationed at Gravesend. Towards the end of 1913 the 1st Middlesex Regiment—the “Die-Hards”—who were at Woolwich, came under me for training. Besides the infantry, the command included the 3rd Hussars, the 29th Field Artillery Brigade, the 7th Field Company Royal Engineers, and some auxiliary services, as well as the artillery camp at Lydd, a point on the coast west of Shorncliffe.

It had for long been my ambition to command at the station where Sir John Moore had trained the famous Light Brigade which, after his death at Corunna, developed into the Light Division under Craufurd. Sir John's system of training, though it was never recorded in black and white, had had an immense influence on the efficiency of at least part of the army of his day, and its traces still remain to the present time. Before I went to Shorncliffe I endeavoured to ascertain what this system was by studying old drill books and autobiographies, and though I could not get hold of anything of the actual letter I acquired something of its spirit. Before the time came for us to share in the 1914-18 war I learned that the 10th Infantry Brigade was regarded by those who inspected it periodically as, together with Capper's brigade, the best trained unit of that size in the British Army. Naturally there were differences between Moore's system and that of a century and more later, but when reading some years afterwards ‘Sir John Moore's System of Training,’ by Colonel J. F. G. Fuller, which dealt with the subject, I do not think that I fell far wide of the target at which I aimed.

The last thing I wish to do is to bore my readers with details of military training, but I hope that I may be pardoned if I touch on that subject as briefly as possible, for after all in the Great War which loomed ahead much depended on the way in which the troops had been trained for the fray.

When I assumed command the annual period of what was termed Collective Training had already begun. This followed the winter or Individual Training, in which I had of course had no voice. I proposed by constant presence on the exercise grounds to note and correct whatever was erroneous, and wait until the Autumn Manœuvres were over to start the system which I intended to adopt. I therefore warned my

brigade-major, Captain Arthur Hutton-Wilson, who ably seconded me and relieved me of much office work during my period of command, that I would spend a minimum of time in the office, of which I had had more than enough in the past ten years, and would daily ride out to watch the troops at their exercises. By following this course I got to know the qualifications of every officer, those of many non-commissioned officers, and a few of the rank and file. I kept a note of errors, and these were communicated at the end of each week to commanding officers and were of value when arranging the programme of next year's training. So far as concerned the first few months of my command all that could be done must necessarily be of a makeshift nature, for it could not be hoped to attain the standard I had in mind; and despite every effort I was conscious that those with whom I had to deal were running before they had learned to walk.

I realised that in a war with a civilised opponent, such as seemed daily to become more imminent, there was bound to be much manœuvring during the hours of darkness. My experiences in Manchuria, where at times only a few yards separated the hostile lines, had convinced me of the necessity of preparing the troops to move as far as possible without the knowledge of the opponent. I therefore caused the battalions of the brigade to practise withdrawing in the dark from positions they were holding, silently and unnoticed, and after some practice their handling after nightfall was not far from equal to day-time level. This training was to prove of value before much time had elapsed.

Important as was the question of training, it did not exclusively occupy my attention, for the existence of the East Kent hounds was a valuable asset for the officers of the garrison, and I put no obstacle in the way of their hunting twice weekly when they could be spared from their military duties, and my brigade-major and I rarely missed a meet.

As regards Folkestone society, I avoided it, and when the day's work was over I went to London where my unmarried sisters were living. I made, however, great friends with Lady Bancroft, who lived near the Grand Hotel, where I had rooms in the absence of an official residence near the camp, and many pleasant luncheon-parties did I enjoy under her hospitable roof, on Sundays when Sir Squire, who disliked Folkestone

and only came there for long week-ends, was present. At these parties I met many interesting friends of hers, among whom were Robert Hichens and Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson and his wife, whom I had already met at the Scott-Gattys. At Walmer Castle were the Brasseys, old friends, and there I occasionally stayed. Twice the camp was visited by royalties. On one occasion Princess Beatrice came on her way to open a bazaar at Folkestone, and I showed her over the Princess Helena Hospital for Women and Children, of which her sister, Princess Christian, was patroness. On another occasion the Duke and Duchess of Saxe-Coburg came—he to inspect the Seaforth Highlanders, of which regiment he was honorary colonel. I took the Duchess to the hospital, and when we arrived there it looked rather deserted, though in one ward were a few little girls and one boy. As some of them were giggling, it soon became known that there being no young patients sufficiently ill to be confined to bed the matron had caused a few of them to get between the sheets without removing their clothes. The discovery was too much for the bogus patients and all burst into laughter, in which the Duchess joined.

After the visit to the hospital we adjourned to lunch at the mess of the Seaforth Highlanders, where I found myself placed at the table next a good-looking young woman, *Fräulein von Thuna*, who was lady-in-waiting to the Duchess, with whom I had some conversation. I soon discovered that she had much the same opinion of the British Army, which she tactlessly disclosed, as had the Kaiser not long after the outbreak of war in 1914.

On the 1st July, by which date I had commanded the brigade for about two months, Sir Charles Douglas, Inspector-General of the Forces, arrived to inspect the troops. When my name had come before the Selection Board six months earlier Sir William Nicholson, who was a member, as also was Sir Arthur Paget, had told me that Douglas had opposed my nomination and, after my appointment had been approved, had chaffingly remarked that I had been “jobbed” into it. Nicholson replied that he entirely disagreed, and later on Sir Arthur had warned me to be on my guard, as Douglas was not well disposed towards me. The reason for the Inspector-General’s hostility I never fathomed, for, as adjutant

of my regiment, it may be remembered he had been particularly friendly, and I felt I owed him a debt for his help when I was a young officer. In consequence of his expected oncoming I felt that, like Balaam, he would come to curse, and I determined that, like that prophet, he should as the result of his inspection depart with blessings.

On both the days he spent at Shorncliffe every officer, non-commissioned officer and man, naturally ignorant of the shaky nature of my relations with the visitor, did his utmost, and then, as on two later occasions when my brigade came under his critical eye, I received almost unqualified encomiums; and our relations after the Shorncliffe visit could not have been more satisfactory. On the first occasion I had every reason to feel anxious, for I was far from satisfied with the standard of training to which the brigade had reached owing to the short period it had been under me. Moreover, my next step up the ladder would depend mainly on the opinion he might form from what he had seen on the training-ground. After he had departed from Shorncliffe I no longer felt that any serious obstacle would have to be overcome.

From time to time visitors whom I knew would arrive at the Grand Hotel, and amongst them were Austin Chamberlain and his wife, also Sir Charles Wyndham and Miss Mary Moore, who came several times and with whom I was intimate. In my capacity as General Officer Commanding I did a good deal of entertaining, which I restricted to the officers under my command and their wives, and scarcely a week passed without my having one or two dinner-parties of ten or less. Sometimes Lady Dorothea Ruggles Brice, whose husband was commandant at the Hythe School of Musketry, would come over and give me a hand at these parties.

During the second year of my command, when I was less busy, I initiated a project which had occurred to me from my earliest days at Shorncliffe, for at that station there was no library for officers and a lecture hall was badly needed. I therefore conceived the idea of raising by public subscription a fund which would suffice to provide a suitable building and, to meet the wishes of the officers of the old Light Brigade, a statue of Sir John Moore. Though a hundred years had passed since he fell at Corunna, by dint of much effort I managed to collect, by the 31st May 1914, £3200. I had a purely

nominal committee, at the head of which was H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught, an old Rifle Brigade officer and colonel of that regiment, who took much interest and encouraged me in what I was undertaking.

The hall of the library owed its construction to Sir Aston Webb, President of the Royal Academy, and Mr John Tweed was responsible for the fine statue of the general which stands in front of the hall, looking across the Channel. The war delayed the completion of the project, which was further postponed owing to my being appointed to command in Iraq.

After the visit of Sir Charles Douglas the training went on steadily till the autumn, when I took the brigade to Aldershot, where the 4th Division, of which it formed part, assembled for a series of field-days. At one of these, as we were returning to our camp, I caught sight of Mr John Burns, M.P., who was standing at the side of the road as we marched by and whom I had met in London when dining with Lady O'Hagan some time before. I rode up to him and invited him to join me and my staff at lunch. He consented and expressed a wish to see the men at their dinners, so I told him to go round their tents and then come to our mess tent. After he returned and we were sitting at lunch he mentioned that he had been a guest of the Kaiser a few years earlier at the German Army Manœuvres, and he gave us a description of what he had seen. We agreed that in many ways the great annual manœuvres in Germany and France were unreal and did not represent actual war or anything like it, for it seemed that they were conducted to impress spectators, especially those who knew little about military matters. His description of what he had seen was vivid, and when he arrived at the finale of the manœuvres he said that he had been astonished at the way in which squadrons of cavalry charged the other arms and became mixed up with them. In fact, he said there was a regular "suave kipper," for so it sounded, and something associated with the humble herring sprung to my mind, for I did not grasp his meaning at the first moment. Then suddenly I realised what he meant and I had difficulty in restraining my laughter. Fortunately I was the only one at the table who guessed his meaning, for his pronunciation of the French language was by no means perfect; and had General Bulfin, who was present and had been acting as umpire for the brigade,

and who had a keen sense of humour, caught the meaning of the travesty of *suave-qui-peut* he might have set everyone laughing. Later in the day, after the departure of our guest, I explained to the amusement of all what "honest John" had meant.

In the spring of 1913 I lost a valued friend in Lady Dorothy Nevill, with whom I used frequently to have lunch when I was at the War Office, and at whose house in Charles Street I met many interesting people. For the first and only time in her life she witnessed the annual Trooping of the Colours from a window of my room at the Horse Guards; and on the last occasion I saw her she told me that a friend had introduced to her Mr Gordon Selfridge and had asked her to invite him to one of her luncheon-parties. I imagine that at that time Selfridge had not climbed into "society," and she said that, catholic as she was in her outlook, she could not quite bring herself to the point of extending her hospitality to the great American storekeeper.

During the winter of 1913-14 I continued my practice of spending about three weeks of my annual leave in Switzerland, and in autumn, after the training season was at an end, went to stalk with friends in the Highlands. My not encouraging *début* in that sport at Killilan, which I have described, did not prevent me from being invited to return to the scene of my exploit. I became so enamoured of this form of sport that I reserved myself for it rather than for small game, as it was easier to get leave later in the year than about the 12th August. I cannot remember all the forests of which I became a frequenter, but they included, besides Killilan and Glomach, Rhidorrock, Kinlochewe, Coolin, Killiehonnet, and Canisp with the Peels, Braulen with Herbert Weld and his nephew Lord Eldon, Lochailort, Blackmount with Lord Durham, and later with the Flemings.

The best day's stalking and the last that I had was at Killiehonnet, near Spean Bridge, though the actual stalks were not equal to some earlier ones where the ground was more interesting. It happened that the project for aluminium production near Fort William was in progress, which involved the construction of a tunnel and light railway for the removal of much *débris*. The effect of this was that the ground was in places a good deal disturbed and the deer betook themselves

mostly to one end of the forest, which was under the shadow of Ben Nevis. At the same time they seemed to be specially on the alert, which did not make the stalking easier.

On my last day at Killiehonnet, soon after reaching the ground following a long walk, several deer were spied, and soon two fell to my rifle in as many shots. This was followed by a pause, and after lunch I shot a third beast. Evening now began to draw near, there was a six-mile walk to the lodge, and the question arose whether one should be satisfied with a good day's sport or use the remaining hours of daylight to add to what had been killed. But the last words of Lord Peel on leaving the lodge were to shoot everything, as the bag so far obtained was well below his limit and many stalking days were not left. After a few words with the stalker, in which I explained the situation, it was decided to carry on, and soon I had a shot at a galloping beast on which we had come unexpectedly. He disappeared over a ridge and the stalker thought that I had missed, though I maintained the contrary, for the shot was not an easy one.

The noise made by the shot or something else must have disturbed some deer at a distance, for, before we could find the last one at which I had fired, I got a chance at another which arrived from our left, and this time there was no question of having missed. On going forward we found both beasts, and that finished the day so far as deer-slaying was concerned.

When I got back to the lodge and told the head stalker what sport I had had and mentioned that five good stags had been secured, he seemed to think that I was joking. This day proved to be my swan-song so far as stalking was concerned, for thereafter Peel confined himself to the gun, and every year until his regrettable death I shot with him either on the Mac-kintosh's moors or others which we reached from Beaufort Castle, which he and Lady Peel rented for the summer.

About a month after my return to London from Killiehonnet I paid a visit to Château des Champs, the residence of Count Cahen d'Anvers, the father-in-law of General Charles Townshend. The château is not far from Paris and had belonged at one time to Madame de Pompadour. The day I arrived we went to the Abbaye de Vaux de Cernay, where Baron Henri de Rothschild lived, whose mother, a charming old lady, was a sister of Lady Rothschild and the Duchess de Grammont.



At the abbey we shot pheasants next day, and everything, as was to be expected, was done on a princely scale, loaders and keepers dressed in blue velveteen, and a great spread at luncheon in the woods.

Another day we shot at the Château de Cuts, which belonged to the Baron de Langlade, near which place I was, not many months after, involved in a skirmish with the Germans during the retreat after Mons. They occupied the château, and, of course, walked off with numerous *objets d'art*, some of which I had noticed at the time of my visit, and cut down for fire-wood many of the fine trees around it.

One day when shooting at Champs I wounded a pheasant and as it flew off, my loader, an ex-soldier, smiled at me and, saluting, said, "*Touché, mon général.*"

Before leaving Champs we went one day to Ferrières, the property of Baron Edouard de Rothschild, which Kaiser William, Bismarck, and Moltke occupied during part of the time the Germans were besieging Paris. The room which the Kaiser used as his bed-chamber was small and could only be reached by passing through the sleeping quarters of the soldier and statesman, so that the monarch seemed to have been well guarded. On their arrival at Ferrières the *maitre d'hôtel* handed over the keys of the cellars with the request that nothing might be removed from the house, except presumably wines and liqueurs. For once the Huns seem to have resisted the temptation to pilfer, and on their departure the unwelcome guests inscribed their names in the visitors' book—the page on which were their signatures was later removed from the book.

Following my return home, in the spring of 1914 I took my brigade-major with me for a fortnight's tour in Spain. After visiting the battlefield of Salamanca we followed on bicycles the route of Moore's retreat to Corunna. On arriving there I was shown a brass gun which must have been with the army during the retreat and at the battle preceding the embarkation. It was in possession of the vice-consul, who was a dealer in old metals, but there were difficulties in securing this interesting relic for the contemplated Moore library at Shorncliffe, and I had to leave Spain hoping to get it later on.

During our tour it was interesting, not to say surprising, to note that the inhabitants of some of the villages *en route* to

Corunna—more especially at Bembibre, where the British troops got “horribly drunk”—had not forgotten the name of Sir John Moore, which they pronounced “Huan Moré,” and when, in my indifferent Spanish, I explained that I was about to erect a memorial in England to the general they expressed interest. This was hardly to be expected, for more than a century had gone by since the British soldiers had passed through the village.

At another village farther west, being very thirsty we entered a wine vault and refreshed ourselves from one of the many barrels which lined its sides. The wine tasted like port, but not so strong, and was cold and palatable. On emerging after quenching our thirst we were accosted by an inhabitant who, seeing that we were strangers, told us that he was the village dentist and insisted on our accompanying him to another vault, where we were obliged to imbibe more of the local port than was good for us. When on leaving I attempted to mount my bicycle I found that the wine had gone to my head and I fell off and bent the treadle; but the effects of the potation soon wore off as we proceeded on our way.

It was either at this village or another that during the retreat Moore's rear-guard was caught up by the French advanced-guard, at the head of which was the cavalry under General Auguste de Colbert. This gallant officer, whose two brothers were also cavalry leaders in the Napoleonic army, was here shot dead by a sharpshooter of the Rifle Brigade, and his fall was witnessed with regret by the British infantry. Some years after my visit to Spain, when visiting Miss Amy Paget, whose great-uncle had commanded Moore's rear-guard, I met the Duchesse de Doudeauville, who was a great-great-grand-daughter of the French general, and happening to get on to the subject of the Peninsula War her forebear was mentioned. After I returned to London I collected for her such information as I could regarding her relative, and in return she sent me ‘*Les Grand Cavaliers de l'Empire*,’ an interesting work which contains accounts of the exploits of her forebears and other distinguished cavalry leaders in the post-revolutionary wars.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE GREAT WAR—THE RETREAT FROM MONS.

BACK again at Shorncliffe I grew more and more convinced that the time was not far off when we should find ourselves at grips with Germany, and this feeling added zest to the work of training the men who would have to bear the first clash of arms. When the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand and his wife took place it was evident that Germany had no intention of doing anything to prevent what must inevitably lead to a general conflagration in Europe. The time had arrived when she felt that she could safely assert herself and make a bid for Teutonic domination of the world.

As far as could be judged from training in peace-time, I felt confident that my brigade would give a good account of itself in the field. From commanding officers to private soldiers all knew what was expected of them and, whether I was myself present or not, they could be relied on to act as if I were with them on the spot. Our daily practice of loading and firing in the lying-down position with dummy ammunition would ensure a volume of well-aimed fire such as I anticipated would come as a shock to the conscript troops with whom they would be engaged. The only anxiety I experienced was that on mobilisation the ranks would be filled with a high proportion of men who, coming from the reserve, would not have been trained under my eye. The excellent material of which they consisted and the seven or eight years' training they had undergone before passing to the reserve would in great measure make up for any ignorance due to having passed some years in civil occupations.

At the end of July much anxiety was felt whether the Liberal Government, who were then in power, would be prepared to face the issue and come down definitely on the

side of France and Russia, and the uncertain attitude of the Foreign Secretary, who had great difficulties to overcome, was far from reassuring.

As I fully expected that I might have to leave Shorncliffe with the brigade at short notice, my sister Alice came to me at the Grand Hotel for a few days so as to be on the spot to pack up and look after my things. Another of my sisters was at Bad Nauheim with her husband and she had been advised by telegram to come home, but the message did not reach her and they got back to England after an exhausting journey and the temporary loss of their baggage.

On the 4th August, after spending some trying days and wondering how the Government would act at this great crisis in our history, news came, to my intense relief, that war had been declared.

Though the air now seemed clear and a great weight lifted off the hearts of all patriotic Britons, I frankly admit that I did not look forward with unalloyed pleasure to what I realised was in front of the nation. My experiences in Manchuria had made me, perhaps more than most officers of the Army, conscious what a terrific struggle lay before us, and though from the outset to the end I never wavered in my firm belief that, given a determined Government, we should emerge from the trial victorious, I did not underrate, as so many did, what efforts would be necessary in order to arrive at that result. Though I made no attempt to forecast the number of years that the struggle might last, I was not one of those who optimistically assumed that the war would be short or might even terminate by Christmas. I thought of the duration of the wars in South Africa and Manchuria, and I felt that what was now before us would demand a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together.

While at dinner on the 7th with my sister, Sir Charles Wyndham, and Miss Mary Moore, a telegram arrived ordering the brigade to proceed by rail to York; and at 1.20 A.M. on the 8th the first train, by which I travelled, steamed off. At York, where we arrived at 9 A.M., we were met by St Germans of the Scots Greys, who had succeeded my old friend of Devonport days; and there I found that half the brigade, through some mistake, had been railed to Cromer, whence next evening it rejoined us. The reason that we had been sent to York was

that coastal raids were feared, but nothing of that nature occurred.

As soon as mobilisation had been ordered and the reservists began to arrive I had arranged for them to be put through a brief but intensive course of training, which would include musketry. Thereafter all that would be required would be some practice in marching to harden feet that had in many cases become soft as the result of sedentary occupations. However, when I applied for the necessary ammunition it was not forthcoming, and I was informed that every round was required for young soldiers and others at home who were not to proceed to the front with the six regular divisions. This gave me rather a shock, which was destined not to be the only one in the next few years; for I had not by this time realised how, owing to governmental parsimony, we were entering ill-prepared on the greatest war in which we had ever been engaged.

My sister again joined me for the few days we were at York and remained till the 18th, when I took the brigade to Harrow, where the 4th Division had been ordered to assemble. Before we moved south we paid several visits to Bishopsthorpe, and the evening before we departed the Archbishop gave me his blessing. At Harrow we remained till the 22nd, doing as much route-marching as possible, and on the night of that date trained to Southampton, sailing next morning, half to Boulogne and half to Havre, the division of the brigade being unavoidable owing to docking limitations. From Boulogne we went by rail to Le Cateau, and as it seemed that we might have to stand and meet near there the first shock of the enemy, I was ordered to select a defensive position for the division.

I had by this time become aware that all was not going as well as had been expected and that, after heavy fighting at Mons, the Second British Corps was falling back and the French had already begun retiring. I kept silence so far as everyone in my brigade was concerned, as the last thing I wished to do was to damp the high spirits of the officers and men. After several nights' travelling all ranks were tired and until sundown, owing to the novelty of finding themselves in a strange country, it was difficult to get them to settle.

That night I was ordered to take the brigade some miles

forward next day, as the troops which had been engaged at Mons were falling back and the 4th Division was required to cover their retreat; and on the 25th we set off at 1.10 A.M., and occupied a position all the following day. Towards evening the German cavalry put in an appearance, but were driven off each time they came near us with the loss of some men and horses. The men enjoyed lying in wait for them on either side of the road, with a rope stretched across it, and this first brush with the enemy had the effect of raising their morale.

When it became quite dark I was ordered to fall back, and next morning the brigade took position near Haucourt. While so engaged there passed across my front, in solemn procession, a French dragoon regiment, still wearing cuirasses and shining brass helmets, moving towards Cambrai, and one could not help thinking that our allies were, in military dress at least, several decades behind us.

In the battle which followed this astonishing display my brigade, which stood on the extreme left of the British front, was not heavily engaged, and as night approached I was ordered to withdraw some distance and act as rear-guard of the division. As the men were tired and had been under fire during most of the day I did not move far and settled for the night in a field which had recently been harvested. Owing to some breakdown in communications, due, I think, to the absence of the divisional signal company, I was out of touch with headquarters all day, and though I had sent my brigade-major to try to find them, he lost his way and I did not see him for thirty-six hours. I felt no anxiety at my rather isolated situation, for I felt sure that the Germans, like ourselves, would be tired, and what I had seen of their cavalry had not impressed me.

The withdrawal from the position near Le Cateau was followed by several days of movement in a southerly direction, during which my brigade was generally rear-guard of the division, and on the 30th August we arrived at the Oise near Noyon. On this day I was again acting as rear-guard and my orders were to be across the river by 6 A.M.; but on arriving at its right bank it was found that a company of a battalion which had been on outpost duty on the previous evening was missing. The cyclist company of the division, which was attached to the rear-guard, was at once despatched to search

for it, and after a skirmish with German cavalry the absent unit rejoined. It was by this time noon on the 30th and we ought to have been south of the river six hours earlier, but I could not leave a quarter of one of my battalions in the lurch and I felt sure that after our encounter with the German cavalry prior to Le Cateau they were not likely to rush blind-fold upon us. I knew that the divisional commander would be anxious at our delay in making an appearance, for there was the possibility that at some other part of the river it might be crossed, which might cause my communications to be severed. But the risk had to be taken. My immediate duty was to destroy the bridges at Pont l'Évêque, near the town of Noyon, and all preparations having been made during the night of the 29th I gave the necessary order to the senior Royal Engineer officer to do so.

Shortly before noon and before the order had been given a report arrived that the German cavalry were approaching, so that no time was to be lost in creating an obstacle between them and the rear-guard. After destroying a foot-bridge of little importance I moved the tail of the rear-guard to the southern bank, and under the lee-side of a cottage I watched what soon followed. First the steel bridge over the northern arm of the stream, which was not fordable, was dealt with, portions of the girders of all shapes and sizes hurtling through the air and falling to the ground with a dull thud. Next in turn came the bridge over the southern arm; but this was a different matter from what had just been effected. It was an ancient structure, built of large blocks of stone, and consisting of several solid piers which carried massive arches. In preparing it for demolition the engineers, so as to ensure its destruction at the first attempt, had taken the precaution of laying a charge considerably greater than that prescribed by their text-book for such an operation.

It was by this time an hour after mid-day, and the machine-gunners, who were covering the passage, having been withdrawn, the charge was fired, but the explosion, though it made the crossing unsafe for wheeled traffic, caused no gap and left the bridge in a condition to allow a man to pass on foot or horseback. The one thing which it had been hoped to avoid had thus occurred, and a fresh charge of 480 lb. of gun-cotton had to be brought up and put in place.

While this work was in progress and was being carried out with the utmost speed the party engaged upon it was protected by troops of the 9th Lancers, under Captain Lucas-Tooth, who fell later in the war, and whose knowledge of French struck me as remarkably good. Danger was close at hand, for the delay in getting the rear-guard over the river had allowed the Uhlans to come up. Some of them must have discovered a passage and pushed across the stream, and as they came in view the Engineer officer at the bridge, whose situation was critical, hurriedly withdrew his men and ordered the village to be evacuated. Bullets were now falling thickly and crashing through the windows of the houses, for the Germans saw their chance and were determined to become masters of the crossing. To add to the excitement the horses of the engineer tool-cart chose this moment to stampede with the vehicle. But the Engineer officer, Lieutenant Gourlay, had not effected what was required and was not to be diverted from his duty ; so snatching the electrical leads he fixed them to the exploder and pressed the handle down. Instantaneously the charge exploded, blowing a huge gap in the bridge and causing the cottage nearest to it to collapse.

Not a moment too soon was the work completed, for dismounted cavalry were now working their way up the side streets and the retreat of the demolition party was in imminent danger of being cut off. Indeed so little time was left that Gourlay and several of his men only escaped capture by springing up behind the troopers of the covering party, who galloped off with them to safety.

Some time earlier I had, at the instance of the Engineers, moved off to rejoin the tail of the rear-guard, as it was advisable to keep clear of the débris that would be hurled into the air by the explosion of the third bridge, and had just entered a forest about a quarter of a mile to the south when a cyclist orderly arrived to say that the 9th Lancers had been surprised by Uhlans and that Lieutenant Gourlay had been killed. I sent back the balance of the cyclist company and rode off to see myself what had happened ; but before I reached the first cottages of the village I found that the report I had received was exaggerated, the facts being as just stated.

The retreat was continued for several days till Chérvy, which lies about fifteen miles east-south-east of Paris, was reached,



and there a halt for the night was made, as a change in the direction of our march was about to take place.

So far we had had little or no news of what was in progress, but as retreats are apt to have a depressing effect on troops—but less so on the British than on other nations, since our wars generally open with such movements—I had taken advantage of a halt some days earlier to explain to battalion commanders how, so far as I could judge, matters stood. I reminded them that it was customary for our Government to be behindhand in war preparations and how in the past commanders such as Moore and Wellington had been forced in consequence to give way before superior numbers. I told them to make it clear to the men that in what was in progress there was nothing unusual and that, were we to act otherwise than we were doing, we should merely be playing the enemy's game and giving him what he hoped for, the chance of crushing piecemeal our numerically inferior forces. I stated, finally, that I should not be surprised in the least if we had to fall back as far as the Pyrenees, but that should that happen the day would assuredly come when, reinforced, we would advance to certain victory. For the present, however, we must, in colloquial terms, "stick it out."

At this time the morale of all ranks, considering that they had been retiring for so many days, left nothing to be desired, and I do not think that an individual of the brigade lost that innate feeling of superiority over the foe which seems to be the natural heritage not only of the British soldier but of most of the nation to which he belongs.

As I have said, we had not had much news so far of what was in progress, but at Chévry an old friend, Archibald Murray, who was Sir John French's chief staff officer, hearing that I was in the vicinity, gave me a few minutes with his map, and from him I learned that the retreat was at an end. It had lasted thirteen days and covered 170 miles and, though by no means a feat in marching, it may be regarded as creditable when it is remembered that the majority of the infantry consisted of men who had returned from civil life, during which they had not been given to take much pedestrian exercise. Moreover, the weather was considerably hotter than is usual in England in summer, and what had been the greatest trial of all was the lack of sleep.

The retreat having come to an end, and having commanded the rear-guard of the 4th Division during most of it, I was to be the advanced-guard commander on the first day we marched in the reverse direction.

We were off at 3 A.M., an early enough hour, but though, according to the 'Official History of the War,' the Expeditionary Force was ahead of the French Army on its right in the advance to the Marne, I am convinced that several hours were wasted in carrying out the pursuit of the now retreating Germans. Had we made one day's march less to the rear we might, before the enemy received reinforcements, have been able to make progress practically unopposed and regained territory in north-eastern France, which for some four years was to remain in German hands. But the opportunity was lost, and this may be attributed to the fact that relations between Sir John French and at least one of the French Army commanders were not what, as allies, they should have been, and were aggravated by ignorance of the French language on the one hand and English on the other.

I cannot say that during the advance—for I will not dignify it with the name of pursuit—I noticed many signs of a disorderly retreat such as one had been led to expect by the official pronouncements that the enemy was "stone cold"; but those were the days of optimism at Expeditionary Force headquarters. I remember in the early days of our advance being visited one evening by Seely (Lord Mottistone), who was attached to the staff of Sir John French. He said that he believed that the Germans were falling back deliberately in order to lure us on and that it was probable that they would suddenly reverse the order of their march and try to overwhelm us. My reply was that I did not believe in such a manœuvre and that, well as it sounded, *reculer pour mieux sauter* was easier said than done. He used for a time after we reached the Aisne regularly to visit my headquarters as well as later on, and sometimes brought me a bottle of white wine and 'The Times,' and he certainly showed himself to be endowed with plenty of courage.

After several days' marching my brigade reached the high ground north of Septmonts, whence on the far bank of the Aisne a considerable body of German troops and transport could be seen retiring in the direction of Laon across the

Chemin des Dames ; and as evening closed in I was directed to billet in Septmonts, where there was a fourteenth-century château which at one time had been the episcopal palace of the bishops of Soissons, not far off. It was now occupied by a Spanish gentleman and his wife, and I have a recollection of passing there, in a great four-poster bed, fully undressed, the most comfortable night I had enjoyed since leaving England. The morning that followed several hours of sound sleep was to be rather disturbed, for during the night, which was very wet and dark, some of our horses had been haltered to the rose-trees which covered part of the walls of the building, and I soon found myself face to face with an irate hostess. She complained that we had been received *à bras ouverts* and in return had caused much damage to her precious trees. I apologised and explained that in the dark and during a rain-storm such mistakes were liable to occur, that I felt she was lucky to have a sound roof over her head, and, finally, that I would have some plants sent to her from England later on. But she was not to be appeased, and her husband, who was probably henpecked, uttered not a word, so I walked away and left my aide-de-camp, whose French was fluent, to calm the lady as best he could.

On the following day we took position on the high ground on the right bank of the Aisne, and while there the third of my four battalion commanders became a casualty, and he was a serious one for he was the best of them all.

It was while holding ground on the Aisne that I suggested that a considerable saving of boot-leather might be effected if boots, instead of being thrown away, as was generally the custom when they were worn through and when there was neither time nor means to repair them, were to be collected periodically and sent home for that purpose. The frequent issue of new boots in place of worn-out ones was a constant cause of sore feet, and as it seemed probable that the army would soon enormously increase in numbers I thought that economies of all kinds ought to be considered. I had noticed when in Manchuria that the Japanese made a practice of collecting their worn-out boots which, labelled with the owner's name, were sent to Japan and eventually came back again repaired into his possession, should he be fortunate enough to be alive. This matter of boot repair was undertaken with

praiseworthy thoroughness, and not long after an establishment was created at Calais where the necessary restorative treatment was provided.

It had now become obvious to me that in spite of optimism in certain quarters a condition of stalemate had arrived, such as I had experienced in Manchuria. I therefore set the men to work at defences, but it required some shell-fire before they took to the matter in earnest. On the front which we were now holding there was not much activity, though we came in for shell-fire from guns of greater calibre than any we then had ; but on the Aisne, as elsewhere, I insisted on an aggressive policy—that is to say, no opportunity should be lost for inflicting casualties on our opponent and not yielding to the temptation to adopt a pacific attitude or even go so far, as some did a little later, as to fraternise with him.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### MOVE TO FLANDERS.

ON the 1st October a rumour was afloat that we were to be withdrawn from the Aisne front and be transferred elsewhere. At this time the British Expeditionary Force was sandwiched with French troops on either side of it, and the proposed move would bring it nearer to the sea and on the left of our allies. The rumour soon became a reality, for one afternoon a colonel of the French Army and several officers with him appeared in order to acquaint themselves with the ground they were to take over from us. On the conclusion of their visit the colonel jokingly remarked that our trenches were so well constructed and deep that he feared that he would experience difficulty in preventing his men from lying down and sleeping when they ought to be on the alert. Two nights later they relieved us, and marching each day after dark so as to be concealed from observation by aircraft we arrived at Pont Ste Maxence, whence we were trained to St Omer. There I had my first experience during the war of a bomb dropped from the air.

The same day as we arrived at this old-world town we moved eastwards, and next day were engaged at Flêtre, where my brigade had some two hundred and fifty casualties, amongst which was the future Field-Marshal Bernard Montgomery—who belonged to one of my battalions—who was dangerously wounded and sent home for a time. The day after the action we pushed on to Bailleul and thence to Houplines, three miles north by east of Armentières. In this advance we passed several places which, through my knowledge of 'Les Trois Mousquetaires' were familiar to me, one spot in particular, where Miladi had been beheaded by the headsmen of Lille. Shortly before reaching Armentières my advanced-guard was checked by some determined Saxon troops who were holding a strongly built farm that bordered the road

east of Houpelines. This farm, owing to the obstinacy with which it was defended, someone designated "Sydney Street," reminiscent of what had occurred several years earlier in a street of that name in the East End of London, where Winston Churchill, who loved to be in the thick of the combat, had when Home Secretary personally directed operations forcibly to eject certain Communists from a building they had occupied.

When word reached me of the check of my leading troops I rode to the place and arranged to blow in a side of the building, and this led to the farm being captured and the defenders rendered harmless. It was here that we lost Captain Carberry of the Royal Irish Fusiliers and several men. Here also Captain Kentish, of the same regiment, won by his gallantry the D.S.O., and a French naval officer, Lieutenant Corbet, who was present from the headquarters of the 4th Division, was awarded the newly instituted Military Cross.

As there seemed at this stage of our movement in an easterly direction some prospect of dislodging the principal force of the Germans before us from a strongly constructed village called Frélinghien, I got leave to undertake its capture, for if we could secure the bridge over the Lys at this point communication with the division on my left would be much shortened. For several days we attacked and made some progress, but the defences were too strong and, though the troops were skilfully handled, our inadequate force of artillery would not permit of our securing more than the western outskirts of the village. There the British line remained firmly fixed till the great German attack in the spring of 1918, when it was driven back.

It was some consolation for our partially successful effort to receive the following commendatory Order of the Day: "The Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief of the B.E.F. has instructed the Third Army Corps to convey to all ranks of the 4th Division his recognition and appreciation of their excellent work in the field during the operations of the 13th and 14th October about Meteren and Bailleul. The successful execution of these attacks has had a most favourable effect on the general situation."

On the 17th the Third Corps published the following order: "The operations conducted by the 10th Infantry Brigade against the village of Frélinghien have been particularly

successful, the combination of the artillery and infantry have produced excellent results. The southern edge of the village was seized upon, the enemy losing about 100 killed, 50 prisoners, besides many wounded."

At this time my day headquarters were situated in a small cottage one thousand yards from the front trenches, and through a blinded window I could observe the slightest movement on the part of the enemy; but great care had to be taken, for had it been suspected that the cottage was occupied it would speedily have become a target for artillery fire. As far as possible I had strengthened my position along the brigade front, but the only barbed wire available, so ill-prepared were we for war in 1914, had to be collected from such as there was round fields in the vicinity, the abstraction of which was resented by the owners of the ground,

My night quarters, which were in the village not far behind my day cottage, were destroyed by a shell and I had to move farther back to the only suitable house, which was in the direct line of fire of the German artillery when it chose to try to destroy a bridge over a canal behind the building. As I did not wish to be bereft of what remained of my belongings after the destruction of my previous headquarters, I had them packed each morning and brought from the first floor to the entrance hall so that they might be readily removed if necessity arose.

The left of my front-line was held at this time by the 2nd Seaforth Highlanders, whose headquarters were in a deserted brewery nearby, the previous occupants of which had had the consideration to leave, on their departure to a safer region, a considerable number of barrels of excellent malt liquor. That unit was thus enabled to make a regular distribution of beer to the holders of the line, and when I visited it after dark—for time had not allowed of the construction of a communication trench which would have made access possible by day—I sometimes would enjoy a tankard of ale. But that pleasure did not last for many days, for the Germans, aware of what the building contained, attacked with heavy trench-mortars that part of my front, and the days of beer-drinking came summarily to an end.

While I held the line near Frélinghien one of the clergy who ministered to my brigade asked me what I wished him

and others of his cloth to do as regards visiting the front trenches. I replied that the matter rested with themselves and that I would issue no orders on the subject, but that I was strongly in favour of their taking such risks as those entailed, since their influence and prestige would be much enhanced by going into the front-line. Moreover, it was of little use to preach to the men to be strong and of good courage unless they showed that they themselves possessed these qualities. I had in my mind a padre who was with my regiment in South Africa who was in the habit of retiring to the nearest field ambulance when firing began, and in consequence did not find favour with either officers or men. In this connection I feel proud that the first—so far as I know—clergyman to win the Victoria Cross during the Great War, whom I recommended for gallantry at St Eloi, was the Rev. E. N. Mellish, who belonged to my division.

At this time recommendations for awards for gallant conduct were being frequently submitted to higher authority. Earlier experience had shown me that in our Army such matters were dealt with in a leisurely fashion and much delay usually occurred before the actual award was conferred. The principle that *bis dat qui cito dat* was being overlooked, I therefore, in order to remedy matters so far as lay in my power, sent home for a supply of the ribbon of the several decorations for gallantry, and as soon as names appeared in Orders or the 'London Gazette,' held a parade, when the ribbons were presented to those who had won them. This gave much satisfaction to the recipients; but so high were the casualties in the war of 1914-18 that it frequently happened that officers and men did not survive to receive the ribbon much less the decoration of which it was a foretaste. The only outward and visible sign of active service in the field are these ribbons, and it is a pity that so much time should be allowed to elapse before they are conferred. The soldier is not too generously rewarded for the dangers and discomforts of war, and the exercise of a little imagination and forethought on the part of those with whom recognition rests would be greatly appreciated, and moreover would tend to raise morale.

In Sir John French's despatch dated 8th October my name appeared, and on the 26th of that month I was gazetted Major-General for distinguished service in the field. This promotion



raised me over eighteen colonels, some of whom in peace-time would probably have been promoted before me. Yet such is the fortune of war that that advancement was the sole recognition I received, except nine monotonous mentions in despatches, for three years and two months' service at the front, during which I was frequently commended by senior general officers, and at the same time several officers were promoted over my head. I will not attempt to fathom the reason for what seemed to be my ill-fortune, but from various indications I have suspicions whence it emanated.

On the evening of the day on which the news of my advancement arrived, having managed to get a couple of bottles of Mumm champagne from Armentières, my health was drunk. Many letters of congratulations from soldiers and others arrived, but I refrain from quoting from them, except in the case of two of the former category. The first letter was from Sir William Robertson, who wrote: "Very many congratulations on the promotion. You have got it in the best possible of ways and everybody thinks you thoroughly deserve it. I hope you may soon have command of a division. These Germans are *done* if we can set our teeth for a few more days and go on killing them. More good fortune to you."

The ultra-optimism expressed in this letter, a feeling which then prevailed at headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force, appeared to me to have no foundation whatever, but throughout the war the lack of appreciation shown by those in the higher ranks of the hierarchy of the true state of affairs was very noticeable.

The other letter came from my old friend, Frank Maxwell, who since the days when we had served on Sir William Lockhart's staff in the Tirah Expedition had won the Victoria Cross for gallantry in assisting to save the guns of Phipps-Hornby's battery at Korn Spruit on 31st March 1900 during the Boer War.

I should have refrained from quoting what Maxwell wrote were it not that what was soon to happen to me in the Ypres salient would prove to be so greatly at variance with what had befallen me when in command of a brigade and later when I came under Rawlinson's command on the Somme.

Maxwell wrote: "You will be surprised to hear from

me, but I cannot resist sending you the following extract from a letter from a pal of mine on French's staff—'Your friend Haldane has done awfully well here with his brigade and has been recommended for special promotion. They tell me that he is an ideal brigade commander, brave as a lion, never depressed, and can get his battalion to do anything.' That's about as good a character as you or any other soldier will get during this great war, and I am delighted to see in the last Gazette that you have got promotion to a division."

A few days later I was ordered to report myself at the headquarters of the Second Corps to take command of the 3rd Division, but first I spent a short time at the headquarters of General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien at Bailleul, in whose corps was that division. When I arrived there he spoke flatteringly of my work and said that he was glad to have me as one of his divisional commanders.

On the 21st November I left Bailleul and went to the Château de Mont Noir, where my headquarters were to be, and took command of the 3rd Division.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### COMMAND OF THE 3RD DIVISION.

THE 3rd Division was one of the original divisions of the army which went to France not long after war was declared, and was the lineal descendant of the division of that number which Sir Arthur Wellesley, on the 18th June 1809, had formed when in command of the British Forces in Spain and Portugal. It had been commanded by Major-General Mackenzie, who fell at Talavera, and for a time by Major-General Robert Craufurd of Light Division fame. But the commander whose name will always remain most intimately associated with the 3rd Division was Sir Thomas Picton, under whom it earned the soubriquet of "The Fighting Division." Perhaps I may be pardoned for mentioning that while under my command it lost none of its laurels, and became widely known in the great army of which it formed part as "The Iron Division." I took the utmost pride in it, and this division and the Guards Division—which, from its constitution, escaped many of the disadvantages of a line division—were, in my opinion and that of many others, second to none of the other thirty-five divisions which served under me for varying periods during the war. And in saying so I do not exempt that fine formation, the 51st Highland Division, with its thirteen kilted battalions, which was in my corps for a time.

That the 3rd Division maintained so great a name was attributable, first and foremost, to the enforcement of discipline and a strong sense of duty, supplemented by the existence of divisional *esprit de corps*, which I did everything in my power to create and foster. Soon after I got command of the division, of whose past history I venture to say that few if anyone belonging to it had any knowledge, I compiled a pamphlet which embodied that history. Of this I had printed twenty thousand copies, and it was issued to all ranks of those

serving in it and to reinforcements from time to time when they joined.

In the Expeditionary Force, as at first constituted, the 3rd and 5th Divisions formed the Second Corps, and it is interesting to note that at the battle of Le Cateau on the 26th August 1914, where Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, on his own initiative, stood boldly to fight greatly superior forces, those two divisions fought side by side as they had last done at Waterloo ninety-nine years earlier. From Mons onwards the 3rd Division had taken a full share in the fighting that followed. Its commander then was Major-General Hubert Hamilton, who had landed with it in France and who was a friend of mine from Staff College days. He was killed in action in October and was replaced by my old school-fellow, Colin Mackenzie, who was invalided home after a brief period in command.

At the time I joined the division it had just taken part in the first battle of Ypres, where it had repulsed several attacks, including a determined onset by a portion of the German Guard Corps, and had suffered heavy loss; but at this time there were plenty of men at home and the casualties were quickly replaced.

As my headquarters were some miles behind the front-line I used daily to repair to the Scherpenberg, a sugar-loaf-shaped hill a good deal nearer the German trenches. Here was my command post, and from it an extensive view could be obtained in fine weather in all directions. It was a popular spot for visitors, mostly military, but when any of importance were among them I felt anxiety, for there was danger that unless they were careful to keep clear of the whirling sails of the windmill which crowned the summit of the eminence a speedy death awaited them. A few of my staff accompanied me daily to the Scherpenberg, the senior of whom was Lieut.-Colonel F. Maurice, a very able officer, whose father was Professor of Military History when I was at the Staff College. He did not remain long with me, but was transferred to take up an appointment at General Headquarters. There were many changes in my staff during the Great War, but I cannot say that they were of much consequence, and amongst those who served in that capacity I recollect only one to whom I took exception, and then for a trivial matter. I have a dislike to the use of scent by men, and fortunately only a few of

them are addicted to its employment. One of these was on my staff, and when it happened that I had to take him with me when visiting subordinates my car would recall his presence in, to me, an unpleasant manner, for several days, for the perfume he affected was of a penetrating nature.

When I took command of the division winter was approaching, and as there was every prospect that the static nature of the war would continue indefinitely it was apparent that many steps would have to be undertaken for the comfort of the troops in the cold, damp climate of Flanders. Space prevents me from inflicting on those who may read what I am writing the many arrangements that were made, but they included hot baths, laundries, and a rest-station where men with minor ailments could remain for a week or ten days. Thanks to the exertions of my sister Alice, who soon after served in France with the Church Army, quite a considerable sum was collected from our friends, and this was utilised in purchasing quantities of articles required for those who were temporarily incapacitated, as well as things for their amusement.

What was exasperating was that after arrangements had been completed for the rest-station an order would arrive for the division to shift to one flank or the other, or even to another part of the front. The rest-station, besides localities where troops were billeted, would have to be handed over to another division, which had no such arrangements for the comfort of the men, and everything would have to be begun *de novo*. When later on I was given command of a corps I took care to introduce measures which diminished the annoyances from which I had suffered when commanding a division.

Our principal enemy in the winter was what was known as "trench-feet," which was the cause of great wastage of man-power. I took the matter in hand and in time reduced this wastage to almost nothing, but it involved the introduction of a measure which did not enhance my popularity. Authority had been given for the issue daily of a tot of rum to the men in the trenches, at the discretion of divisional commanders, and this issue was partly responsible for the prevalence of trench-foot trouble. Before taking the rather drastic step of curtailing the issue of spirits I took the advice of my senior medical officer—an exceedingly able man—and

his opinion was as follows : The action of rum or some such stimulant, comforting as it might be for the moment, would have the effect of quickening the action of the blood and driving it with increased rapidity to the surface of the body. There it would continually be cooled, and before long the heart would find that it had harder work to do in maintaining the circulation. Therefore to take rum in order to resist cold for hours together would be like stirring a cup of hot fluid, whereby fresh surfaces would be continually brought in contact with the air and would be cooled with far greater rapidity than if left quiet. For the same reason it is a well-known fact that Arctic explorers never drink spirits before going out into the cold.

I now stopped the issue of rum in the trenches, but on the night on which a relief took place the men, after having their feet oiled and massaged, were given on their return to billets hot tea to which was added, if desired, a tot of rum, after which the partakers went to bed, thoroughly warmed by the hot drink and stimulant. During the days when the men were out of the trenches the issue of rum was not stopped.

I am well aware that there were officers who differed with me on the stimulant question, but they had not studied the medical aspect, and, right or wrong, the method I followed led to trench-foot trouble in the 3rd Division being far less than in any other division in Flanders in 1914-15. I foresaw that what I had ordered would be unpopular, and at the divisional cinema, which I established in a large barn not long after I took command, jokes regarding the "teetotal" division would sometimes be introduced during comic interludes when I happened to be present. I paid no attention to what was said and joined in the laughter that followed. Popularity was the last thing I sought, for my business was to keep the men fit and the ranks as full as possible of the splendid stuff of which they were composed.

One thing from which we suffered greatly was the lack of material for maintaining our defences in proper condition in the muddy country in which we were campaigning, but apart from this deficiency what was at fault was discipline. This varied in different units, and when I had the Guards Division in my corps in 1918, on the first occasion that I visited their trenches, the contrast between them and other

divisions was very marked. That this was so was merely a question of good or bad discipline, and the Guards, like the Spartans of old, from their earliest days have ever been conspicuous for that military virtue. Many instances of this come to my memory, such as were demonstrated during Moore's retreat to Corunna, but one in particular I must quote. When serving in Spain in 1812 a Guards' ensign wrote that just before the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, when the brigade took its first turn in the trenches, "Lord Wellington has complimented the Guards upon their exertions. The men really deserved it, and the Engineers said they would do more than any other two divisions; and it is natural, for they are all strong men and accustomed to hard labour. As a proof of it, though they had fresh ground to break for the three times it came to their turn to work, they lost fewer men in the trenches than any other brigade, because they would cover themselves in one-third of the time."

It was only by incessant inspection of the several lines of defence we held—and there was sometimes no more than a single indifferent line—and by insisting on such work as had been ordered being carried out at the risk of being dubbed "fussy" that I succeeded in making the 3rd Division a unit whose trenches would actually be praised by another division which happened to relieve it in the line.

We had not been long settled on that part of the front which faced Wytschaete when I was required to secure an identification of the German division that faced me. There were several ways of effecting this, into which I need not enter, but an officer of my Intelligence Staff undertook alone to do what was wanted. Captain (now Lieut.-General) Sir J. H. Marshall-Cornwall donned garments such as would not impede his movements but protect him from the historic Flanders mud, and, worm-like, crept into no-man's-land in the hope of either taking a prisoner or finding some article of clothing or equipment that would furnish the necessary information.

Starting off after dark on his somewhat eerie mission, he worked his way—I regret to say without difficulty—through our barbed-wire defences and after a time struck with some alarm what he imagined were the electric cables which he supposed were connected with a German mine. With his wire-cutters he began to sever the connections, but he soon

found that he was dealing with twigs which were partly embedded in the soil. Proceeding farther he arrived alongside what he thought was a German soldier lying fast asleep. Again the wire-cutters were brought into play, this time to stun or slay the inert object which he had encountered; but on closer inspection it was discovered that he had arrived some days too late to use them with effect. As Cornwall remarked to me afterwards, it felt rather grim to find himself alone in no-man's-land with no other companion than the rotting corpse of a Hun. He proceeded to remove the side-arms and part of the equipment from the departed one in the hope that he might find stamped on them the required identification mark, but he struck blank. The reconnoitrer now made his way to our lines without further adventure, but by this time he was more in the condition of a Thames mud-lark than of a British staff officer.

A little later another officer of adventurous disposition, bent on a similar quest, found himself in a German trench. As he paced gingerly along he tripped over a pile of sleeping Huns, who cursed him volubly for his clumsiness in treading on them. He likewise got safely home, thanks to his presence of mind which led him to mutter in as guttural tones as he could summon the single word *entschuldigen*, that being about the extent of his knowledge of the German tongue.

While I inhabited the Château de Mont Noir, among the members of my mess was the Rev. F. H. Gillingham, the well-known Essex cricketer, who was much liked by us all. At this period of the war there was attached to the 3rd Division a squadron of the 15th Hussars commanded by Captain Courage, who later became colonel of that distinguished regiment. One Sunday the padre was holding a service in a barn and after it was over he told me with a smile that so as to interest his hearers he had illustrated his text by introducing mention of the game in which he was known to excel. Hardly had he finished his illustration than a trooper at the back of the audience, possibly hailing from Essex county, overcome with local memories, had the temerity to utter in tones audible to all present, "Good old Essex!" His appreciative words aroused a half-suppressed titter—a breach of military discipline, which I am sure the good padre palliated, as also did the senior officer present.



On the 26th November Sir John French paid a visit to the division and, after some flattering remarks regarding my share in the earlier phase of the war, told me in confidence that the King was shortly expected to arrive to inspect the troops.

This happened at the beginning of December when His Majesty came, accompanied by the Prince of Wales and others. I met the King at the roadside below the Scherpenberg, up which he climbed to where my day headquarters were. It happened to be an unusually fine day, so clear that there was a distant view nearly as far as the sand-dunes on the Channel coast. I had had a table prepared on which there was a map and on it lines were drawn towards places on the German front, and the King examined them through my telescope. Arrangements had been made for a few of our precious shells to be fired at the opposing trenches, but this drew no return fire, for which I was thankful, as the party round the summit of the hill was a conspicuous mark, though several thousand yards from the enemy's front-line.

Twenty minutes later the King continued his tour, departing after shaking hands all round. It struck me that the Germans may have wondered why we had begun firing at one-thirty, for we were not given to expending unnecessarily ammunition on them as they often did on us.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### FUTILE ATTACKS.

THE King's visit was followed by rumours that there would be a resumption of activity on the western front in the near future, for the Russians were urging their allies to attack so as to relieve the pressure to which they were being subjected and which threatened to overwhelm them. As it was important, indeed imperative, to maintain the war on two fronts and ensure that no member of the Triple Alliance was given a loophole to evade his obligations, a scheme was prepared which, though it did not prove to be of much effect, at least showed the Russians that the desire to come to the rescue existed. The scheme, which as at first proposed was of a somewhat grandiose nature, was eventually watered down to an attack by two battalions of the 3rd Division. Those who ordered it failed to take into account the nature of the ground of Flanders, which by late autumn and winter is such that after rain it is impossible, more especially for a man burdened with arms and equipment, to move at a pace faster than a walk. The proposed attack would further suffer by having to be carried out with inadequate gun support, no smoke-screen, and the almost certainty that the German barbed wire would not be destroyed. But at this stage of the war such matters, vital for success, were given little or no consideration, and the price the British infantry had to pay in consequence was a high one.

I do not propose to refer in detail to what occurred on the 14th December 1914, when I had to carry out the first of these futile operations. This one cost the division seventeen officers and four hundred other ranks, mostly belonging to my own regiment, of a type that could ill be spared, and the gain from their efforts was absolutely *nil*. While the attack was taking place the Commander-in-Chief and many senior officers were present on the Scherpenberg; and Sir John

French remarked to me that in front of us were mainly machine-guns—weapons which, above all others, were to give most trouble during the war, an obvious fact which he did not seem to recognise. He also mentioned that he had thirty naval armoured cars—tanks had not by that time appeared on the scene—which he thought might be useful for destroying the said machine-guns, and these he offered to hand over to me. When one remembers the stupendous efforts that had later to be made before the German front was breached, the absurdity of this offer is apparent. I dissembled my feelings to the best of my power, but only sufficiently to prevent these useless vehicles from being thrust on me. What we wanted most at this time was gun ammunition, but the normal allowance per diem was only two shells for each gun, although for an attack such as that in December the allowance was somewhat increased.

During the day of this abortive operation the Prince of Wales, who had shortly before arrived in France and was serving with the Guards Brigade, was present, and when a German officer, who had been taken prisoner, was brought to the Scherpenberg he offered to take him in his car to the place where he could be examined without loss of time by the Intelligence Staff. I recall wondering what that prisoner would have thought had he known that he was being driven by the heir-apparent to the throne of Great Britain.

On the same day I was talking to General Byng, who commanded a cavalry division at this period of the war, and he told me, in all seriousness, that he had orders to be ready to support the attack and drive on to the Rhine. He had been instructed to keep his horses saddled and bridled, and as I had a large portion of my division available for pursuit there seemed little probability of their being called upon for that purpose.

On the conclusion of this abortive operation we again turned to do what was possible to strengthen the front, in spite of the bad weather and swampy ground. One occupant of our front-line at this time was reputed to have said of it: "If I put up my head, I am sniped; if I keep it down, I am drowned; if I move about, the enemy sees me and I am shelled; and if I stand still, I'm court-martialled for getting frost-bitten." His conclusions, though rather overdrawn,

contained more than a germ of truth in them, for the officers and men in the trenches in the winter of 1914-15 had a sorry time, and do what one would it was difficult to remedy their condition. Where they had to spend their days and nights was not distinguishable from the surrounding country, except that it was wetter.

One day when hunting about the village of Kemmel, which was almost in the front-line, I entered a deserted building to see if anything inside it could be put to use, and to my delight found a large collection of empty beer-barrels. Orders were given to remove them, saw them in half and nail a board across each portion, and soon each man in the front-line, like Diogenes, had his own barrel and could keep his feet reasonably dry. But the use of Kemmel village did not terminate with the barrels, for soon the whole of the material it contained, bricks and beams, found their way into the trenches, and that habitation was no more.

During that trying winter there was attached to my division as French *liaison* officer Captain of Dragoons, Prince Aymon de Faucigny Lucinge, whose wife, an American lady, Mrs Stickney, I had known before she married him. He soon became a great favourite with us, and when the Guards Division was formed he was, unwillingly, transferred to it. We met later in Paris, and soon after, when the drain on officers of the French Army increased, he was posted to the staff of a division. When the outlook was at one time critical I had a letter from him in which he mentioned his anxiety owing to the volatile nature of the French soldier, and he expressed the great reliance which, after being with my division, he felt on the stolid and enduring qualities of the British troops. Like most of his fellow-countrymen and women, he disliked what are sometimes called "baby puddings," and though I tried to get him to eat those made from rice I failed.

As I have said, nothing was gained by the attack of the 14th December, but it was typical of the operations on a narrow front which it fell to me to carry out at this stage of the war. These operations were what a French writer aptly describes as "the bloody method of the small effort," or what Marshal Joffre termed "the nibbling policy." It required the Great War and the excessive losses suffered to teach our leaders the folly of such operations; and that this

was so was recognised in a revised edition of the 'Field Service Regulations,' in which it is stated that "the subsidiary attack on a small front with insufficient support will seldom have much effect on the enemy's plans and is likely to cause heavy casualties." This statement contains nothing that was not known before the Great War, but during that struggle it was completely ignored by all those under whom I served. I did all I could to discourage vain and costly attacks, and when in spite of my efforts they were ordered to take place and ended in something not far from failure it was hardly fair to lay the blame elsewhere than on the shoulders of those who initiated them. The lives of officers and men were at times simply squandered as if they possessed no value, yet it must have been obvious how small was the prospect of a result commensurate with the efforts expended on them. My troops were keen and never lost confidence in their commander, and nothing I said to subordinates was couched in language that could betray my feelings regarding what was ordered to be done. I never forgot that "if the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle"; and that I succeeded in creating the belief that I wholeheartedly approved of these attacks is, I think, evinced by what Sir Philip Gibbs wrote in his book, 'Realities of War.' In this work he says of me: "The officers and men under his command accused him of too much enthusiasm for attacks, whatever their price. But they admitted that he took more personal risks than he need have done as a divisional general, and was constantly in his trenches examining his line. In the old salient he often demanded service in the way of raids, the holding of death-traps and the execution of minor attacks which caused many casualties, and filled men with discontent at what they believed to be unnecessary 'asking for trouble.'"

Nothing could be further from reality than these remarks, and although the men did not know it I did my utmost at the risk of losing my command to spare them from having to engage in operations that threatened to be futile. I was well aware of the risk I ran, but that did not deter me; and what was hard to bear was that when the attacks failed or fell short of hopes I was not held guiltless by those over me and earned the resentment of those lower down the scale.

As Christmas approached, aware that the Germans paid

more attention to that season than even we do, I issued orders with the object of discouraging any approach to friendly overtures in the front-line between our men and theirs. I had procured the report of Lord Bryce's committee on the atrocities committed in Belgium towards the inhabitants of that State and had issued several copies to the troops so that they might not forget the brutal kind of enemy to whom they were opposed. I had no fear of weakness as regards the behaviour of the Scottish and Irish soldiers, but their more tender-hearted and forgetful comrades of the southern kingdom could not be trusted to exhibit the proper attitude. On my front, therefore, no fraternisation took place, but this was not so at some other parts of the line. Advances made by the Germans were not repelled, and in consequence certain commanders got into hot water with higher authority. On the front of one division the enemy tried to repeat a truce—unauthorised, of course—which had taken place earlier and was warned what would happen. One of the German officers then came forward and asked that gun-fire might be opened on his men between the lines, on which they sat down close to our parapets and some time elapsed till they could be made to return to their own defences.

My day headquarters on the Scherpenberg continued to be a popular resort for privileged visitors from home and elsewhere on account of the extensive view they afforded, and they possessed the advantage of being almost beyond the reach of the fire of the German field-guns. Amongst the more important visitors was King Albert of Belgium and his brother-in-law, the Duc de Vendôme, who came several times. The former, with whom I had a prolonged talk, informed me that it was the first occasion that he had visited the country near Ypres; and he then went on to discuss the nature of the warfare in which we were engaged. This led me to tell him that I had seen something of the same nature in Manchuria when I was with the Japanese Army. He then spoke of Sir Ian Hamilton's book, 'A Staff Officer's Diary,' which he had enjoyed reading. He concluded by telling me that he was very short of gun ammunition and that the Russians were even worse off in that respect, though they could hardly have had less than ourselves.

Other visitors, as well as the Prince of Wales, who appeared

more than once, were Prince Alexander of Teck, Lord Selborne, Lord Durham, and Lord Middleton—an old acquaintance, who kindly brought me a box of cigars. We had only one female visitor, an American lady, Miss Mary Roberts Rinehart, whom we kept to lunch. Winston Churchill once came, but I was told by the officer with him, my former brigade-major, that he did not reach the top of the hill.

When the middle of February 1915 came, one of my brigades was taken away for a time to bolster up a division which had had a rather trying time, and in its place that formation sent me a brigade which I was informed required attention. It did not take more than a couple of weeks with the 3rd Division to create in it a moral revolution, and I did not hesitate to utilise it on the worst part of my front. The brigade-major of this formation was Captain Cyril Deverell, who later, to my satisfaction, was to succeed me in the command of the 3rd Division. Recognising his qualities, I soon recommended him for the command of a brigade, which he was given before long, and he rose eventually to become Field-Marshal and Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

There had always been difficulty in Flanders in getting into one's front trenches, except at night when little could be seen, for the muddy condition of the ground and lack of revetting material had delayed the work of construction of communications. One such trench had been pushed out some three or four hundred yards towards and short of our line at St Eloi, and one day when inspecting part of the front I arrived with my aide-de-camp, Captain Congreve, at the extreme end of it. As the day was dull and rather hazy it struck me that we might walk across the open space and, taking the chance of not being seen by the German sentries, reach the front-line. Off we started, keeping well apart and walking at a steady pace, arriving a few minutes later at the trenches held by the Royal Scots. From the looks on the men's faces we might have dropped from the clouds, and we had been lucky to escape notice from the mound at St Eloi, whence the sentries overlooked all the ground which we had traversed. After inspecting the line at a part where I had not been before we made our way back whence we had come without drawing a single shot.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### MORE FUTILE ATTACKS.

EARLY in June 1915 my corps commander, Sir Charles Fergusson, under whom I had mostly served since I got command of the 3rd Division, informed me that he had been ordered to send the division to the Fifth Corps (Allenby), which was in the Ypres salient, on the flank of which his own corps was. I was sorry to leave Fergusson, as he was to lose the division, for he was a first-rate infantry officer who appreciated our difficulties and did all in his power to assist in surmounting them. Of Allenby I knew little. He had been at Sandhurst at the same time as myself in the term senior to mine and I had only known him by sight. And here I must say that the last thing I wish to do is to utter a word that could detract from the credit of his performance in the Middle East. But the Allenby of the Ypres salient was not he of later days, as the historian, Captain Liddell-Hart, points out in his 'Through the Fog of War.' In that work he says: "When he [Allenby] left there [France], to take over command in Palestine his nickname, 'The Bull,' had an increasingly repugnant significance." And again, when referring to the stalemate on the western front, he says: "In the trench warfare which followed there was no scope for cavalry, and many cavalry soldiers began to change to the command of infantry formations, among them Allenby. The result of this change did not enhance his reputation with the Army. It was complained that his offensive spirit was not balanced by adequate knowledge of the conditions to which his orders applied." My own opinion, for what it is worth, bears out what the historian states.

It is not, however, strictly accurate to say that Allenby was one of those who changed from his own arm of the Service



to the slower-moving infantry, for through seniority he had not had the experience of commanding an infantry battalion, brigade or division, and to that, I think, was in some measure due his lack of appreciation of the difference between the two arms of the Service. Other cavalry officers who served under me proved themselves to be as efficient as any belonging to the less mobile arm, but their knowledge was acquired with formations below that of an army corps.

It was a noticeable feature of the Great War that the number of cavalry officers among the leaders of the higher formations was out of all proportion to the comparative strength of those arms, and I think I do not err in my opinion that in peace-time many of them did not take their profession so seriously as did the infantry officer. An exception was General Julian Byng, under whom, when he was head of an army, I served for more than a year when I commanded the Sixth Corps. He had familiarised himself with the arm to which he had not originally belonged and exercised his functions in neither a hasty nor intolerant manner.

Before I had even taken over my new front or passed under his command I had a visit from my new corps commander, who informed me that he wished me to retake certain ground—which, be it noted, the cavalry had lost—and in an airy way added that he proposed to take my division out of the line “for a day or two” and then carry out the operation. He seemed to think that the assault of a fortified position could be made with almost no preparation and that, like the walls of Jericho, the mere blowing of trumpets and the shouting of the assailants would cause them to fall. But Joshua, who in his day was a great leader, took care to prepare the way for his attack before launching it.

That part of the front which it was intended we should recapture was then receiving much attention from the German artillery, which, owing to our inadequate gun-power, we could not keep in check. The ruins of the hamlet of Hooge and the château of that name close by were being so frequently bombarded that work on the defences was almost impossible and the situation there was causing anxiety. The daily casualties were heavy, and some of the garrison were suffering from “shell-shock,” a nervous malady which was not until some time later fully understood. During a bombardment one of

my engineer officers, who was superintending such work there as was possible, noticed a man—probably a bus conductor in peace-time—who was going round attempting to collect tickets, while another, who had got possession of an automatic pistol, began firing promiscuously, to the danger of his comrades.

I did not receive Allenby's proposal with enthusiasm, the more so because my men had been continuously in the trenches for six months, except for a few days' rest between tours in the front-line. Such sedentary duty did not tend to strengthen discipline, and it was evident that the brief period which was to be allowed for training would be far too short to be of any use. I knew that all ranks were keen to have a blow at the enemy, and that in their desire to do so they might run riot and mar the plan of operations. When, however, a few days later I was informed that the date on which we should be engaged was a well-known anniversary, though the troops required no fillip, I issued the following order: "To-morrow will be the centenary of the battle of Quatre Bras, where on the 16th June a century ago the British and Belgian troops, under the Duke of Wellington, won a hard-fought battle two days before the crowning victory of Waterloo. The scene of these two victories lies only some seventy miles from the bivouacs of the 3rd Division, and the memory of the gallant stand made by the British and their allies against veteran soldiers in superior numbers is still fresh and will never be forgotten. Once again, though a hundred years later, we are fighting for the freedom and peace of Europe, and the General Officer Commanding the 3rd Division feels it his duty to remind all ranks of the splendid example of the British soldier of the past in the sure and certain belief that it will inspire his successors to as great or even greater deeds of valour."

The 3rd Division knew that its predecessor had taken an important share in both those battles, and I made the most of that fact to stir up the enthusiasm of all ranks, though I felt, as I have said, no stimulant was necessary. I may mention here a fact that was withheld from me, which was that we were to be engaged in a subsidiary or holding attack, the object of which was to prevent the Germans on the Fifth Corps front from withdrawing troops to help at a

point where the main battle would be in progress. That made no difference, for our share in the business was performed with the greatest enthusiasm and determination.

Regarding attacks of this nature, I have quoted in the preceding chapter what the 'Field Service Regulations' had to say, and even before the operation of the 16th June my own experience and study bore out what they stated. But of all places on the British front that could have been chosen for an offensive action the Ypres salient was by far the worst. The attacking troops would be overlooked at every point from the higher ground, which was in possession of the Germans; the only communication with the front-line passed through the ramparts of the city and across a canal at one point—a fact well known to the enemy; positions for guns to support the assaulting troops were hard to find and strictly limited, for the town of Ypres took up much of the available space; and perhaps the worst feature of all was that the farther we gained ground in an easterly direction the more deadly would be the fire of the German artillery, which would strike us more and more on both flanks.

I pointed out these disadvantages, but my voice was as that of one crying in the wilderness and I was given a hint that it would be wiser to keep silent, for what I stated was known to others besides myself. Nothing further could be done, and, remembering what Pitt had said of Wellington that before undertaking an operation his practice was to point out the difficulties and having done so carry out what was required to the best of his abilities, I decided that I could have no better example than the great duke and held my peace.

The attack took place and was followed not long after by another of the same nature and on the same unfavourable ground. Sir John French announced that he was satisfied, Allenby was promoted, and some of my staff received awards; but I was not satisfied with what had been achieved, for I felt in terms of the Latin adage that because everything had not been done nothing had been done.

I may mention in passing that in the operation of the 16th June one of my brigade-majors, who was to win a name in the next war against the Germans, become Field-Marshal, a Viscount, and Governor-General of India, was severely

wounded and lost the sight of an eye. He was an excellent officer, who did not again serve under me during the war, and when he was invalided home I strongly recommended him for promotion.

I must here pass to a matter which I took up soon after we joined the Fifth Corps, and I recommend those who have read so far to omit the next few pages. In an obituary notice regarding a divisional general, which appeared in 1942, I observed that he was given credit for initiating what I am about to mention, and it is only fair to myself and those who helped me that I should state that long before he had done anything in the matter it had been started in the 3rd Division. I have in my possession a letter from the Deputy Quartermaster-General of the British Expeditionary Force in which he desires me to send him particulars of the matter in question.<sup>1</sup>

I have earlier stated that during the Boer War I sometimes replaced articles of equipment by those found in deserted camps. Again, in the Russo-Japanese War, I had noticed how careful the Japanese were to clear débris from a battlefield and their habit of collecting part-worn boots, which were repaired and reissued. When I came to command the 3rd Division and relieved the 27th at St Eloi I was astonished to find the ground littered with equipment, such as picks, shovels, as also small-arms ammunition, and well over sixty miles of telephone cable. I do not suggest that my own division was innocent of wastage, for it was difficult to ensure that orders in that respect received the attention which was desirable. However, after the attack of the 16th June, when I visited the ground we had captured, it was obvious that wastage had arrived at a point where the efforts of units alone would not suffice to remedy matters. I therefore discussed the question with Colonel Sillem, my senior administrative staff officer, and directed him to prepare a scheme which would deal with wastage on a broader basis than heretofore.

The outcome of this discussion was the introduction of a system which I need not describe, but it led to the salvaging of articles that had been thrown away or lost. These were collected, sorted out, such things as were serviceable being reissued, and the rest were sent to railhead, whence they

<sup>1</sup> What is said here about salvage is confirmed by the 'Official History,' vol. ii., p. 539.

were transported to Calais to be dealt with by teams of women and others.

This work was in progress when the letter arrived from General Headquarters. It stated that "various efforts have at times been made to put a stop to the appalling waste which goes on," and that apparently "the 3rd Division was the only one in which there was an organised system."

The introduction of anything new, especially if it is liable to cause extra work, is apt to arouse hostility, and my humble efforts to prevent waste were shortly seen not to be popular higher up the military hierarchy. Soon after the system was introduced I was, in company with General Allenby, visiting some of my troops when we came upon the divisional salvage dump—a huge pile of miscellaneous equipment. I was aware of his interest in salvage matters, which did not extend beyond making a fuss if a half-consumed tin of bully-beef were discovered during his walks. He turned to me, and in an angry tone demanded to know what this collection meant. On this I replied, "Only, sir, some of the stuff my men have collected since we arrived in the corps area." This reply recalled to him an announcement in my divisional orders which had given in detail what had been collected in the corps area since our arrival. I may add that this announcement, which had been made so as to encourage the salvaging of discarded war material, stated that in the collection for the past week alone were the following items: 1204 rifles; 206,100 rounds of ammunition; 400 rations of preserved meat; 308 sets of equipment; a lorry; 1329 greatcoats; 715 coils of barbed wire; 3437 entrenching tools; 2541 shovels; 15,465 sand-bags; 47 stretchers; and innumerable other articles.

Allenby no doubt considered that the divisional order reflected on his corps, for such wastage ought to have been checked long before the 3rd Division joined it. He never again showed any interest in the question of salvage; but if he saw one horse, among the many hundred transport and other animals in the corps, nibbling the bark of a tree to which it was tied, his wrath would be aroused. Sir Herbert Plumer took even less interest than the corps commander in salvage matters, and though the country must have been saved millions by our efforts no word of acknowledgment ever got as far as the division.

My own men soon became keenly interested in the work, and so anxious were they to furnish good results that on one occasion they annexed the arms and accoutrements of a strong working party which had deposited them at a little distance from where gleaning operations were in progress. On another occasion a field-gun, which seemed to be deserted, was man-handled to the dump, and the wrath of the Royal Regiment to whom it appertained can be imagined when it was discovered that a precious field-piece was missing and had been annexed by the snappers-up of unconsidered trifles.

Having made a clean sweep of the débris left in the 3rd Division area by its predecessors, the salvage company, for lack of game, took to poaching in the preserves of its neighbours and offered to assist in cleaning up their refuse; but the offer, though declined, had the effect of drawing attention to a matter that was being neglected.

Another economy which I initiated in my division, thanks to the suggestion of my supply officer, who could not undertake it without my authority, was as follows. He had noticed that the quantities of all rations issued exceeded what were necessary for the average man's consumption and that much was left uneaten or found its way onto the rubbish heap. He asked my approval to underdraw the number of rations to which we were entitled, and this led to a saving of 67,000 meat rations in three months—about those of an infantry battalion. This reduction was not noticed, and in spite of the diminished issue the wastage of bread and meat continued almost unabated. I thought it wiser to hide this innovation from Allenby, as I am sure that, had it come to his knowledge, it would have been vetoed. It must be remembered that most of the men in the Great War were located in trenches, where they led sedentary lives, and if given the full ration laid down for normal conditions would have been overfed, though the local population would have been the gainers.

Before I leave the subject of salvage I may mention that some time later, while commanding the Sixth Corps, and after an Army system to deal with it had been introduced, I made a note of some items which had been rescued from being thrown aside as of no account. Amongst these were no less than 18,279 lb. of dripping saved from meat rations, which would serve for manufacturing glycerine; 151 lb. weight of

nails from empty packing-cases ; 148 sacks of waste-paper ; and 4762 lb. of solder obtained from melting down biscuit and other tins.

I kept a list of articles saved, numbering more than three hundred, but the total of these would be so great that I have shunned the labour of adding them up. I did so, however, for three months of 1915, and amongst the articles were three million rounds of small-arms ammunition, many more millions of empty brass cartridge-cases, nearly three thousand bayonets, many thousand pounds of biscuits and beef, huge quantities of waterproof sheets, and masses of equipment.

When it is remembered that the British Expeditionary Force in various parts of the world ran up to several million men, it is not difficult to imagine how great a sum of money might have been saved had a proper system of salvage and prevention of wastage been devised before the outbreak of war. But twenty-five years later, when we were again at issue with Germany, the matter was overlooked. The feeding of the troops in both wars was admirably carried out by the Quartermaster-General's department, but prevention of waste, both at home and abroad, was neglected. That such would be the case I had foreseen.

In October 1939 I wrote to the Minister of Supply, the late Mr Leslie Burgin, whom I had met in the previous summer in Switzerland, and mentioned my interest in salvage. He replied that he was making preparations for dealing not only with the salvage in the field but also with the general question of war-time waste. His letter concluded by stating that, although the organisation was not yet in operation, it would shortly be, and that he would have gained a start of several years over the salvage arrangements set up during the last war. A little earlier I communicated with the Quartermaster-General on this subject, but until wastage had become a crying scandal many months later I have no recollection of its being handled seriously. Had a close watch been kept on the fighting forces and on the millions associated with them who drew rations, Lord Woolton—to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude—would have had less difficulty in making two ends meet.

In connection with the question of salvage I must mention that on 7th July 1915 the Prime Minister, Mr Asquith, and

Lord Kitchener, when paying a visit to the front, were brought to my headquarters near Poperinghe, where General Plumer gave them lunch. As I recalled how Lord Kitchener, when Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, had been obliged to exercise the strictest economy, I brought up the question of salvage. He appeared to be interested, so I suggested that it would encourage the men in my division who were engaged on it if they could be given one penny or less in the pound of the value of what they collected. He said nothing, but smiled grimly, and it crossed my mind that, like those who deliberately encouraged the breeding of rats so as to earn a premium for the number of tails produced, he might be thinking that my men would go out of their way to augment the waste so as to gain a higher reward.

I have reason to recall the visit of the Prime Minister for, a few hours later, I had a narrow escape when on my way to the front-line at Hooge. For some reason my aide-de-camp, Congreve, and I, instead of making use of the communication trench, walked over the open ground, every yard of which was in full view of the Germans. As we approached a cottage, which someone had named Dormy House, a high-velocity shell exploded close in front of us by the edge of a chicory field along which we were walking. The explosion preceded the sound of the burst, so that we had no warning of what to expect, but I saw the flash and something that resembled a cricket-ball coming directly towards me, and in a moment I was struck on the solar-plexus and sent head over heels on to my back. When I came to myself I saw Congreve, who thought I was dead, kneeling beside his general, who was gasping for breath, and I managed to blurt out, "Rub my tummy," which he proceeded to do. A minute or two later we took refuge in a shallow drain alongside the cottage, where we lay till the firing ceased, when we resumed our walk to Hooge. Before we left the spot where the aluminium fuse and I met, Congreve picked it up and in doing so burned his fingers. A few weeks later he presented it to me mounted with an inscription, and it now lies on my writing-table.



## CHAPTER XL.

### IN AND OUT OF THE SALIENT.

FOR a short time affairs in the salient were for that part of the front comparatively quiescent, but on our side we were busy preparing to show activity. At Hooge a mine, which for some weeks had been driven under the German front-line, was nearly ready for exploding. At the end of the gallery, which was 190 feet long, 3500 lb. of ammonal had been placed in position, and until the date arrived for the charge to be fired the risk of discovery by those who were counter-mining had to be accepted. As I had been informed that my division was likely to be moved a little distance from that part of the line we were holding I asked that before that took place I might have the satisfaction of witnessing the Germans, who held that turbid spot at the apex of the salient, being blown sky-high. My request was granted, and at 7 P.M. on the 19th July the mine was touched off, with the result that a crater about fifty yards in diameter and the same number of feet in depth resulted. About forty seconds after the explosion, an interval which the engineers considered would allow the displaced earth to fall to the ground, the party which was to carry out the assault made its way across and round the crater while there was in the air a dense cloud of dust which hid it from the Germans. The bit of ground which I had been ordered to secure came into our hands, but owing to the heavy retaliatory fire of the enemy's guns and mortars the defences, which had been hastily constructed round the rim of the crater, were to a great extent destroyed, and although a German company had been obliterated by the explosion our own losses amounted to about the same. Enterprises such as these, which found favour with higher authority, were costly affairs and brought little or no advantage. Moreover, owing to lack of ammunition, we were dominated by the

German artillery and ran the almost certain chance of being counter-attacked.

Three days after the mine was fired I paid what I thought would be my farewell visit to Hooge, but could only reach the crater during a brief lull in the almost unceasing trench-mortaring to which it was being subjected, and I came away with a severe headache caused by the concussion.

As I felt sure that the Germans would not placidly accept the rebuff to which they had just been subjected, I urged Plumer to allow my division to postpone its move elsewhere for one week, which would permit the defences to be repaired and would ensure the safety of the ground. For what reason I cannot say, the request was refused, and the only concession I could obtain was permission to leave one battalion at the place for a period of twenty-four hours. This was an unsatisfactory half-measure, and I remarked that we should lose the place in a week, for I knew the value of the division newly arrived at the front that was to replace the 3rd.

On the same date we began taking over a portion of the front near St Eloi, with which I was familiar, and the comparative quiet of the new line was very noticeable after the months during which we had held Hooge, where no hour of the day or night was restful.

As I had foreseen, Hooge was recaptured a week after we had left the place and, soon after, it again came into our hands after a successful attack by the 6th Division. It was very noticeable how much greater were the number of guns and the quantity of ammunition allotted for this operation than in any I had carried out, but the corps to which the attacking division belonged had an artillery officer at its head. In the 'Official History of the War of 1914-18' details regarding the artillery allotment and the ammunition allowed are given, and it may be mentioned that the 6th Division's attack was preceded by a bombardment lasting six days, that on a similar occasion of the 3rd Division being only a few hours.

The recovery of Hooge brought no advantage to the 3rd Division, for no sooner was it retaken than I was ordered to relieve the troops there. My first visit to the ground with Walter Congreve, the father of one of my aides-de-camp, who commanded the 6th Division, showed how tremendously the position had been battered by artillery before the successful

assault and what an amount of work would be necessary to make it defensible. By this time the rank and file of the 3rd Division had begun to realise that their mission in life was to clear up messes left by their predecessors, and they had named themselves, in military parlance, "the Fatigue Division." However, they were good workers, and before long we had got everything into fairly ship-shape order ready to give the Germans a warm reception if they attempted to disturb us, which, knowing who was in front of them, they were not likely to do.

One day when examining as far as was possible the ground in front of a part of my line at a point whence one overlooked a German trench, I noticed a working party filing into it at a distance of about three hundred yards. I could not resist the temptation to give them a surprise and, seizing a rifle, I poured the contents of the magazine into them, which caused instant confusion. I was about to return the rifle to the owner when a bullet hit the sand-bag on which it rested, within an inch or two of my head.

Another holding attack, in which I was to take part, was at hand—a diversion to the major operation which would follow farther south—and on the 22nd September my own division and that on my left were hurled against the point of the salient which seemed to have a magnetic attraction for headquarters of the Expeditionary Force. We took some prisoners, but, as in earlier attacks of the same nature, the superior German gun-power effectually prevented our holding the captured ground, and before evening came we were having difficulty in holding our own trenches in face of a heavy counter-attack. Thus what was effected fell short of anticipations, though it drew from the Commander-in-Chief a telegram in which he intimated that he was particularly pleased with the success gained by the 3rd Division. This was followed up by a visit, when he announced that he was perfectly satisfied with what had been done, as it had prevented the Germans from moving troops from our front to where they would have been of service farther south.

There a smoke-screen and gas had been used, and during the battle it was said that a German soldier—perhaps at one time a temporary Londoner, who had acquired a sense of humour—was heard calling out, "What's the matter,

Tommy? You're wrong about the date. This is not the 5th November!"

A month after this attack took place the 3rd Division was relieved from duty in the trenches after serving there for many months, and I went home for a few days' leave. One day I lunched with Willie Peel at Brooke's Club, to meet Lord Milner and Stephen Graham. The last named had just returned from Russia and gave us a gloomy account of conditions in that country and the improbability that she would continue the struggle against Germany. Lord Milner had something to say about conscription, then a burning question. He was convinced that it could be introduced at once in England and Scotland were the Government not afraid of a few newspapers, all of whom habitually came to heel if strong action were taken, and he added that the Cabinet were nearly always "a pack of funks."

It was during this my first visit home since the outbreak of the war that Albert Stern, whom I had known for several years, told me in strict confidence that he would show me the latest weapon of war, of which much was expected. Next day we went to Wembley and there I was shown a large-size model in wood of what became known later as the "tank." This greatly interested me, for during the Russo-Japanese War I had the idea of some such weapon as a means of overcoming barbed wire and machine-guns, efforts to counter which had so far proved to be ineffectual. After this visit I came to the conclusion that I had seen what would prove to be the solution of the question, and I realised how important it would be to keep its existence secret. We must, if possible, be first in the field with it; and on my return to the front I unblushingly denied rumours regarding it which from time to time were heard.

One evening before we again took over part of the front I dined with Miss Maxine Elliot on her barge in Belgium, whence she distributed garments to refugees who had lost their homes and belongings. I asked her to dine with us and see our divisional cinema, but when I mentioned the matter to General Plumer he thought it would be wiser to cancel the invitation, as at that time there were reports of ladies being entertained at Sir John French's headquarters and the Press was giving prominence to the subject.

At this period of the war many changes in my division were taking place, and I lost some of my most trustworthy battalions, which were replaced by newly raised ones, for a time of much inferior value. General Plumer one day remarked to me that he would on no account part with the 3rd Division, in which he had great faith. If he imagined that this tribute flattered me, he was mistaken, for I had no wish to remain in the Ypres salient where no credit was gained whatever we did.

I must pass over much that took place about this time. We were once again involved in an attack to recover ground lost by another division—not the first time that had happened—and I came to the conclusion that it was better to hold part of the front rather than be in reserve behind the line, whence we were certain to be called upon to clear up messes made by others. On the occasion in question when I returned from leave I found that most of my division had been sent to the front to restore the situation and I was not to be in command of the operation that followed. It was a success, for again no lack of guns and ammunition were spared, and immediately after it took place an officer of my staff, who had been sent to assist, wrote as follows to me: "I think that you would like to know what a name the 3rd Division has left here and what a good show they made yesterday. I hear it everywhere that there is no better lot to follow in trenches or camp, and when the Royal Welch Fusiliers and Gordon Highlanders marched out to go into the scrap yesterday the whole crowd turned out to see them, and all said that everyone ought to be proud of such a show. It was St David's day and the Welshmen, not to be outdone and though leeks were not available, had covered themselves with onions, and they also cut a dash on going out." As two of my infantry brigades and much of my artillery had been ordered to recover the ground under the divisional commander whose troops had lost it, I urged that I might have command of the operation, which was to be carried out deliberately and with plenty of ammunition; but Plumer must have got it into his head that I was an unlucky general, for he would not consent and, like Achilles, I had to sulk in my tent.

A few days passed and we were back again in the line, and I visited after dark the scene of the late fighting. As

I went along the recaptured trenches the Germans, at only a few yards distance, seemed to be in a highly neurotic condition. Rifle-fire was incessant and the sky was bright with the flare of Very lights, while on our side affairs were almost normal. Canadian troops were now arriving in Flanders and parties came from time to time to the front to obtain a taste of what trench warfare was like. One evening on their way back a drawling voice was heard remarking to the conductor of the party, "Waal! I guess when I get home to-night I shan't have a story to tell like the boys when they came back from scouting in the Promised Land." There was some cause for this remark, for the ground over which the speaker had passed on the way to and from the trenches was water-logged and almost like a snipe bog, and everywhere were the broken branches of trees destroyed by artillery fire.

My headquarters were then in a village the children of which, when I went on leave, would clamour for me to bring back boots and shoes, of which they were sadly in need. My return was hailed with excitement, and my quarters were soon thronged with a crowd of young people of both sexes, busily engaged in trying on what I had brought with me and squabbling over the different sizes until they got what fitted. I may add that the way some of them produced money and were anxious to recoup me was quite touching; but, like Joseph's brethren, they were dismissed to their homes with their cash. Before this time my chauffeur, having discovered a toyshop in Ypres, which was deserted after being shelled, where some of the stock was left, used to bring back what he could find, which he collected while I was visiting the front-line. These articles were distributed when we returned to the village.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### ST ELOI.

IN March 1916 my division was on the St Eloi front where, it may be remembered, I had almost exactly a year earlier replaced the 27th Division after it had lost possession of what was known as "the Mound." This was an artificial feature, formed from the spoil removed many years earlier during the construction of a canal not far off, the possession of which provided an extensive view over the ground which we held. It was now proposed, not to regain possession of this feature, but obliterate it and the trenches in its vicinity. With this object mining had been in progress for some months, and as the work was almost completed it was proposed to undertake the operation about the end of March. In the meantime I was ordered to visit another part of the front, taking with me the brigade commander, who would be entrusted with the operation, as it was imagined that the mining work there would provide lessons that would be useful at St Eloi. This visit only served to show that the conditions on the front some eighty miles south of Ypres, where the soil stood on chalk, were so radically different as likely to lead to false deductions, and this was soon shown to be the case.

The mines which were to figure largely in the coming operation were deep, so as to reduce the risk of discovery, and were four in number, and the most important was charged with 30,000 lb. of a powerful explosive, known as T.N.T. (trinitrotoluene). A fifth and shallower mine had been discovered by the Germans, who were busily counter-mining, and it had been damaged by the firing of a camouflet, which had reduced its value.

Up to this period of the war the 3rd Division had on no occasion been given sufficient time for preparation nor allotted an adequate force of guns, ammunition and hand-grenades,

and when at practice over a replica of the ground and trenches to be attacked—based on airplane photographs—I announced that this time things would be different as we were to be more generously treated, all ranks burst into cheers mingled with laughter. I should state that beyond the destruction of the mound it was not apparent that anything would be gained by the operation. It was not intended to be a diversion to draw attention from a greater operation and prevent reinforcements from being moved and, like earlier attacks, it possessed the disadvantages of being planned to take place on a narrow front such as the 3rd Division, to its cost, had already several times experienced. The mere blowing down of the mound and sending to their doom a company of German infantry forming the garrison thereof would have no effect on the war in general; and earlier experience had shown that such an operation would almost certainly lead to retaliation and consequent expenditure of our limited supply of gun ammunition.

The proposed operation was not as simple as it appeared to be at first sight, for the explosion of several deep mines would cause so great a disruption of the ground that it would not be possible for the two assaulting battalions to cross the space directly in front of the mound, or what remained of it, after the charges had been fired. Their assault had to be arranged so that it came from both flanks and led to their uniting at some distance on the German side of the mound, beyond the ground where it had been. On the practice ground special care had been taken to ensure this connection, and this was the more necessary since the attack would take place in darkness and possibly in mist, which was prevalent at this season of the year. But as the poet Burns wrote :—

“ The best-laid schemes o’ mice and men  
Gang aft a-gley,”

and the truth of his words was to be shown at St Eloi.

The preparations for this enterprise had covered so long a period that there was reason to fear that the intention to attack might have become known to the enemy, and before everything it was important that it should be carried out as a surprise. The troops taking part in it would have to lie for some time above the mine galleries and in close proximity



to the German front trench. Not only then was absolute silence an essential part of the plan, but anything that in the stillness of the night might betray their presence to the watchful sentries had to be taken into consideration. The battalions of the attack were ordered as they approached the front-line to break step so that the regular tramp of armed men might not be audible, and smoking was strictly forbidden. Besides these precautions there were other less obvious ones. Thus each man would have with him a small packet of lozenges so as to reduce coughing to a minimum and, at the final halt, some hundreds of yards before reaching our own front-line, opportunity would be given for blowing noses. It was hoped thus to reduce the trumpeting at close quarters which might be caused by the use of handkerchiefs. These precautions were effectual, for prisoners stated that the attack came as a complete surprise.

All being ready, the mines were exploded at 4.15 A.M. on the 27th March, and at the same moment the first of our heavy shells hummed overhead and reached the objective. For a time all seemed to have gone as planned, but as information arrived from the front it appeared that the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers—the battalion on the right of the attack—had attained its objective with little loss, but that its neighbour, the 4th Royal Fusiliers, had come under heavy fire, lost many officers and men, and failed to make connection on the ground beyond the mound. On the morning of the attack I attempted to get to the Northumberland Fusiliers, but the brigade-major, Kenneth Buchanan, of the brigade which carried out the assault, and four men had already been wounded in trying to do so, and as gun and rifle-fire were heavy and continuous I was urged to postpone my intention. On the 1st April, taking with me as many cigarettes as I could obtain, I managed to reach the 1st Gordon Highlanders, who had relieved the Fusiliers on the ground they had captured and were up to their knees in water. I told them that it was imperative to hold on to the position, as a further attack was about to take place to secure the original objective, and that I relied on them to do so.

At 2 A.M. on the 3rd the 8th King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment was deployed in pitch darkness and mist, and a few minutes later had driven off the enemy and established

themselves where it had been hoped we would have been on the 27th March.

Directly after the first attack some of the enemy had occupied the rim of the crater which, through the failure of the 4th Royal Fusiliers to advance, was connected with their front trench. There they remained till Captain Congreve, brigade-major of the unit which had replaced the original brigade, with four men arrived, when ten officers and some eighty other ranks downed their arms.

When I reached the headquarters of the brigade at 8.45 A.M. I was met with the disconcerting news that the attack had not been successful and that Congreve had gone forward to clear up the situation. Just as I was starting to go to the trenches word came that the Germans were surrendering, so I immediately made my way to the front-line, where I met the commanding officer of the 8th King's, who confirmed what I had been told. I then went along the whole length of the line which we now held, half of which I had visited on the 1st, being up to the waist in mud and water; and it was fortunate that I did so and saw with my own eyes exactly where my troops were. As I passed along the line I noticed an unusually good-looking young German, who asked me for water. I told him that he would get it as soon as possible and he murmured, "*Die Engländer sind gute Leute.*" He had been wounded in the thigh and could not walk, but would soon be carried to a safer place by our stretcher-bearers.

I may mention that Captain Congreve's gallant action in taking prisoner the occupants of the crater, who were armed and many times exceeded in number his small party, was rewarded by the bestowal of the D.S.O. I recommended him for the Victoria Cross, which his father had won in South Africa, but this was only given after his death in action on the Somme a few months later, when he again distinguished himself.

On my return to headquarters at Rheninghelst, where my toilet required attention owing to the filth through which I had waded when going round the line, I was sent for by the army commander who had arrived, and when I was in a fit state to meet him his congratulations were truly embarrassing; but what the division had achieved was soon to be forgotten.

Prior to the attack it had been settled that if the attack were successful, and provided a definite line were secured, the 3rd Division, all of which during the days following the original attack had been thrown into the line, would be relieved by the 2nd Canadian Division. On the morning of the 3rd, Major-General Turner, who commanded it, visited the trenches and expressed himself as satisfied with the line, which was handed over to him on the night of that date. As the Canadian Division was half again as strong as my own, and fresh, I felt no misgivings about the relief. I had, however, in my mind the recollection of a series of earlier reliefs, all of which had resulted in the loss of ground held by my troops, and the Germans had more than once shouted to my men: "When the 3rd Division leave we will retake the trenches." In the relief, therefore, at St Eloi great care was taken to ensure that the arrangements were such as would not allow of that happening. As I write I have before me a copy of my original order on the subject, which was carried out to the letter, and this included instructions that parts of the 3rd Division should remain with the Canadians for twenty-four hours in the front-line to make sure that all was well. I may mention that I ordered my senior staff officer and my artillery commander to stay at headquarters of the relieving division so long as their presence could be of advantage.

The relief took place as ordered, and forty-eight hours later the Germans made a heavy counter-attack and were back again where they had been before the 27th March. The situation was thus reversed—of course a scapegoat had to be found; and political considerations settled in which direction the hunt for that individual would lie. The corps commander stood by me, as was to be expected from a man such as he, but he was replaced and reduced to the command of a division. I refrain from mentioning what happened higher up the military hierarchy, but it did not redound to the credit of at least one senior officer. In the circumstances I was perhaps fortunate to escape the fate of the corps commander, who was unjustly treated.

Shortly before General Hugh Fanshawe was removed from command of his corps, when he came to say good-bye, he told me that some time earlier, when Sir William Robertson, who was then Chief of the Imperial General Staff, had visited him,

my name came up in the course of conversation. Robertson remarked that no divisional general had had so hard a time as I and that he had tried several times to help me, but that there were at the War Office some who had "their knives in me." This was no news to me, and there was nothing to be done but grin and bear it.

Before I pass on from this unpleasant episode I must mention that soon after it was over I went home on a few days' leave with Congreve, who was about to marry Cyril Maude's younger daughter, and while in town I called on Sir William Robertson. I said that I had not come to complain, but that I was beginning to get disheartened, as from the day I had been given command of the 3rd Division nothing seemed to go right. Time after time I had had to carry out "holding" attacks, which only caused heavy loss and brought little or no credit to the division or its commander. Robertson repeated much of what he had said to General Fanshawe and was most sympathetic. He urged me to "keep my pecker up," as he termed it, for he was well aware how matters stood so far as I was concerned; and he concluded by saying that he would take an early opportunity of speaking to Haig on the subject.

It may seem that I am making rather heavy weather regarding my treatment at this period of my career, but it must be remembered that for well over a year I had borne unaccountable treatment and had had several officers junior to myself promoted and given commands over my head. My one object in life and throughout the war was to crush the Germans, and I had no undue craving for distinctions. The fates seemed to be treating me unfairly, so I soothed my wounded feelings with Lord Orrery's lines:—

"Let not one look of Fortune cast you down;  
She were not Fortune if she did not frown;  
Such as do braveliest bear her scorn a while  
Are those on whom at last she most will smile."

I must continue therefore to bear the "slings and arrows" of that outrageous lady and hope that in course of time she might see fit to look upon me with a more favourable eye.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME.

WHEN I returned from home my headquarters were at a village called Tilques in the Pas de Calais, and as the festival of Corpus Christi was about to take place and we now had a divisional band I offered it to the *cure* for the procession which would be part of the ceremony. I was then informed that he had some time earlier heard the band playing a tune which had caught his fancy and that he would like this to be chosen for its march through the village. On inquiring into the matter it appeared that the air in question was a popular ragtime tune, which was quite unsuitable for such an occasion, and this being explained to him he asked that another might be substituted, so one of quite different character, entitled "Pomposo," was chosen by the bandmaster.

The battle of the Somme was at this time about to begin, and as the 3rd Division had been ordered to take part in it we were going through a brief period of intensive training preparatory to moving south. Before we left the Second Army the commander, when he came to bid me good-bye, again laid stress on his determination to have the 3rd Division back in his army when it was no longer required elsewhere. I cannot say that I was anxious to see again the Ypres salient after my experiences there, and I am sure that every individual in the division shared my opinion on that subject.

The battle began on the 1st July, and a few days later I moved to Corbie and joined General Walter Congreve's corps, which formed part of the Fourth Army under Sir Henry Rawlinson. When the latter came to see me soon after my arrival he said that the Commander-in-Chief's intention was that the attacking troops should push forward across the space of about a mile which separated us from the Germans and carry out the assault from a line which would be dug close to that of the enemy. As it was evident that such a

procedure would be exactly what the enemy expected we would do, it was of all things to be avoided. I was anxious that the attack should be a surprise—an element which had been absent in some of our earlier operations—and I urged that not only my division but the other divisions on my flanks should, under cover of darkness, cross the intervening space and, lying close to the enemy's trenches, attack at dawn without a preliminary bombardment. After some demur my proposal was approved, the staff work involved was admirably carried out, the details of which need not be entered into, and it was left to me to fix the exact hour at which the attack of the several divisions would be launched.

Since I had been given command of the division I had always been hampered and not helped by outside interference, but on this occasion neither Congreve nor Rawlinson did more than acquaint themselves with my plans, and I was determined that their confidence should not be misplaced and that what had to be done should be an unqualified success. This it proved to be ; but the memory of the battle of the Somme will ever remain with me, for during it I lost two gallant officers, who had both served as my aides-de-camp, one of whom was a soldier of unexampled bravery and distinction.

I shall not enter into details of the battle, which would have been a far greater success had supporting troops been close at hand to further it, but when early in the morning following that of the attack I went to the front I was met by Lieut.-Colonel R. Hely-Hutchinson, commanding the 4th Royal Fusiliers, who told me that a little earlier one of them, Captain Oswald, who had been given command of a battalion, had, while standing beside him, been mortally wounded. Then a few days later Brevet-Major W. Congreve of the Rifle Brigade, whose father commanded the corps in which I was then serving, lost his life. I had seen him on the previous day at the headquarters of the brigade of which he was the staff officer, in an old dug-out made by the enemy, which was receiving a good deal of unpleasant attention, for the Germans had quickly recovered from their defeat of the 14th July and were heavily counter-attacking. Next day he was shot dead by a sniper.

His loss to me and to the Army was irreparable, for he was one of the very best young soldiers and by far the most

promising officer of his rank I have ever known. Brave, modest, and distinguished by military ability far beyond his years, for he was only twenty-five, many a time since those days have I pictured the height to which he would, had the hand of Fate not struck him down, assuredly have attained. While with me, Congreve won a brevet majority, the D.S.O., the M.C., and the Legion of Honour, but, sad to say, he did not survive to see the Victoria Cross on his breast which, as I have earlier said, was awarded posthumously.

For some time after his death I found it difficult to maintain the same interest as before in what was going on, and the congratulations from several quarters regarding what the division had done lost for me much of their value.

When the battle, so far as the 3rd Division was concerned, was almost over I had a letter from Congreve's father, who bore the great loss of his eldest son in Spartan-like fashion, and I quote what he said: "The success of your deployment and advance of yesterday morning can only have resulted from very good staff work and discipline in battalions. Will you tell your staff and that of your brigades how greatly I appreciate their work, and your Brigadiers and C.O.s the same. I am not very well read in military history, but I doubt if the assembly of two corps by night close to the entrenched line of an active enemy has ever been so successfully done. I have heard much of the 3rd Division, but it is even better than that, and you have had it so long that it is all your work. I am lucky to have the benefit of it and grateful to you for your help."

This letter was followed by a message from the commander of the Fourth Army, which arrived through the Thirteenth Corps. It was as follows: "Please convey to all ranks of the 3rd Division my sincere admiration for their gallant behaviour since they joined the Fourth Army. Their attack on the Longueval ridge on the 14th July will go down to history as a feat of arms of which every officer and man of the division may well feel proud. Their defence of Longueval village and Delville Wood under heavy and incessant bombardment is yet another proof of their gallantry and determination. It is a great pleasure to me to think that I once commanded the 3rd Division for four years before the War."

I may mention at this point of my story that on the 17th

July I had a visit from Captain Bernard Montgomery of the 1st Royal Warwickshire Regiment, the future field-marshal, who had been dangerously wounded when with my brigade earlier in the war and had just returned to the front. While at Shorncliffe he was a keen and efficient young officer ; but I cannot say that I then foresaw the height to which he would later rise, though it did not surprise me. After his great successes in North Africa in the next World War I wrote him a line to say how extremely pleased I was with the splendid news regarding his exploits, and it may be of interest if I quote his reply. "I was delighted to hear from you. It was most kind of you to write. I well remember those days at Shorncliffe in 1914 when your good and sound teaching laid the foundations of my military knowledge."

At this stage I may mention that, though I claim no credit for the fact, seven officers who at different times served under me in the Great War became field-m Marshals. Their names are Wavell, Alexander, Dill, Devereux, Gort, Montgomery and Ironside, and the last served a second time under me when I was in Iraq. Though Alexander was with me only for a short time in 1918 he greatly impressed me, and I felt that given the chance he would go far in his career.

The fighting on my front was heavy and continued for several days, and by the 21st July the 3rd Division in this battle had lost from all causes 171 officers and nearly 4500 other ranks. General Congreve was anxious to keep it when made up to strength, and the last thing I wished was to return whence I had come.

A few days after we had gone into rest, several of which I spent with Congreve, the Commander-in-Chief called and said that he had received glowing reports from both the former and Rawlinson regarding the 3rd Division and its commander. I replied that the credit was due to the splendid way the officers and men had fought ; but he would not accept what I said and maintained that much of the credit was mine. He told me before he left that he had noted my name for the command of a corps.

By this stage of the war I felt that it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to make up for the time lost while I was with the Second Army in Flanders, even should I get command of a corps in the near future, for from the day when I had



been ordered to take the division into the Ypres salient my career had been much retarded. Up to that time affairs had run smoothly, and later again when I was under Rawlinson on the Somme, but I cannot say the same when I was under Allenby and Plumer in Flanders.

At 10 P.M. on the 6th August an order arrived to the effect that, having been appointed to the command of the Sixth Corps, I must join it at once. My successor was to be Cyril Deverell, the man whom before all others I would have chosen. The lateness of the hour made it impossible for me to bid farewell personally to those who had never failed me during the nineteen months they had been under my command, so I wrote hastily an order in which I said that I felt that I owed my advancement to the magnificent way the division had fought throughout that period. I then drove off with my aide-de-camp to the strains of "Auld Lang Syne" on the divisional band and made for the headquarters of the Third Army at St Pol.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### COMMAND OF THE SIXTH CORPS.

I HAD been so long with the 3rd Division that I felt sad at leaving it and regretted that I was once again to find myself under the constellation of Taurus, the thought of which called up anything rather than pleasant recollections. I was determined, however, to bury the hatchet and crush any feelings of resentment for what I had suffered in the past and make a fresh beginning.

The man I was to succeed in command of the Sixth Corps was General John Keir, who was highly esteemed by his brother gunners and who had been at the Staff College at the same time as myself, but in the junior term. Unfortunately he possessed the faculty of rousing the wrath of the army commander, Allenby—"The Bull"—so much so that the witty Byng, who also commanded a corps in the Third Army, had given him the soubriquet of "The Toreador."

During the forty-eight hours I spent at Allenby's headquarters all went smoothly. He talked a good deal about my new corps, which he said required "pulling together," and desired me to visit its headquarters, which were at Noyelle Vion, a village some miles west of Arras. As I do not wish to be unjust I must say here that it is possible that I may have to some extent misjudged Allenby, for his senior administrative officer, General Sillem, who had earlier been on my staff, told me that he had several times remarked how unjustly I had been treated; yet he does not seem to have taken any steps to rectify matters.

As desired, I went to Noyelle Vion and saw Keir, who did not seem to understand why I had come. Naturally I supposed that he would have been informed that I was to supersede him, but I found after a few minutes' conversation that I was the bearer of unexpected and disagreeable tidings.

As Keir was rightly popular with his staff, it was easy to foresee that when I replaced him I should not be warmly welcomed. Allenby was getting rid of a man who may have been slightly *passé* by a rough method instead of frankly telling him to his face—as in similar cases I made a point of doing—why he was dispensing with his services.

When I got back to St Pol, Allenby tried to extract from me what Keir would be likely to say at the interview he was to have with the Commander-in-Chief next day, but I kept him in the dark, as my sympathies were elsewhere. I saw Keir when he returned from this interview, at which the army commander had not been present, and he told me that he had uttered some home-truths to General Haig, amongst which he had said that Allenby was a bully and intolerant. I expect that Haig was aware of that fact, which was known throughout the Army, for between these two cavalry soldiers no love was lost.

I now turned my thoughts to what lay ahead of me and found that there was much to occupy me in my new command. When hoping to rise to the command of a corps I had often reflected on matters which affected the well-being of divisions in the larger formation, and I at once set to work to put these ideas into practice. I will not enter into them here, but to put them shortly they were intended to stop the cavilling which was customary when one division replaced another in trenches and in billets; and I am glad to say that the order on the subject which was issued and communicated to each division as it joined the corps was effective.

I spent as much time as I could spare in visiting the troops in and out of the trenches, but the constant changes in the composition of the corps made it impossible to create *esprit de corps* such as had been so advantageous in the 3rd Division. It cannot have been customary at this or any time for senior officers to go to the front-line, for on several occasions brigade commanders remarked to me that they had never before seen a corps commander in their trenches. No doubt a general can carry out his duties to a considerable extent with the aid of maps alone, but details of ground as affected by weather cannot be reproduced on paper and can only be learned by inspection on the spot. But, while occupying myself mostly with my forward area, I had not overlooked the comfort of

officers and men in a rearward direction. Much had been achieved in that respect for the rank and file, but there was no place where the officers of the corps could spend the night on their way back to rejoin their units when returning from leave, or meet each other when out of the front-line. I therefore instituted the Sixth Corps Club at Avesnes-le-Comte, not far from my headquarters, where there were a few bedrooms, bathrooms, feeding arrangements, and next door was the corps cinema. I may here say that as we advanced the most suitable building was requisitioned as a club-house, being replaced during fighting by large tents; and as this was the only establishment of the kind with the Expeditionary Force it was much patronised and greatly appreciated.

Among the divisions that joined the corps was the 35th, known as the "Bantam" division. When it was raised it was composed of men below the standard height and chest measurement, but otherwise of suitable fighting material. However, after being heavily engaged on the Somme when the division distinguished itself, its losses were so considerable that they could only be replaced by indifferent material. Not long after this division joined me and was put into the front trenches its presence became known to the Germans, who showed their knowledge by imitating the crowing of the barnyard fowl; and a few nights later a raid was made on the trenches of all three of its brigades. Several of the undersized specimens were taken prisoners, others killed, and a few fled to the rear, which led to courts-martial and death sentences. I felt sorry for them, for they had not the stamina to make them battle-worthy, but the army commander was merciless and insisted on the extreme penalty being carried out. I, however, took the opportunity to report that I could not be responsible for the security of my front so long as the division continued to be constituted as it was, and suggested that a thorough combing-out was essential. In anticipation of that measure I ordered the divisional commander to withdraw undesirables, and from the remainder whom I saw myself I extracted many more. Before, however, the division could be allowed to part with so high a percentage of its numbers as I proposed, another inspection, this time by the army commander himself, would have to take place. As I feared that he might not be so drastic as I had been in the

process of elimination I took care to stage-manage the inspection. The men who had been combed out were therefore drawn up in line by companies along some steeply sloping ground and care was taken that the army commander, who was not lacking in inches, should view them from above and not below. On the flank of certain companies were disposed a few files of tall cavalrymen—Royal Dragoons and Scots Greys—who had been sent to fill vacancies. Thus, when the inspection took place, the Bantams looked at from above seemed more of the dimensions of young chickens than dwarf poultry.

Only one contretemps occurred which almost upset my carefully arranged plan, when one of the brigade commanders, who had been with the division from the time of its arrival in France when it was at its best, failed to support my selections, and when asked by Allenby his opinion of human bantams began to praise them. Before he had committed himself too deeply he got a gentle reminder by a kick on the shins that he was spoiling sport, and the situation was saved.

During the process of elimination I myself made a bad shot, for at the preliminary inspection I chanced to select for removal an undersized man who proved to be the feather-weight boxing champion of the division. This produced such a protest from the brigade commander that it led to his exemption from the rubbish heap. It was observable that the man in question appeared to be glad to remain, although most of the others who did not come up to the standard were genuinely pleased to be cast. It is right that I should not omit to say that at a later period of the war the former Bantam division, reconstituted, when under the command of that gallant guardsman John Ponsonby, rendered distinguished service.

Before leaving the subject of this division I must refer to a story related by Sir Philip Gibbs in his book, 'Realities of War,' which I have earlier mentioned and in which he devoted a chapter to me. I will not vouch for the accuracy of the story, but it is amusing and worth repeating. It is as follows: "A Bantam died in a billet"—General Haldane, according to Gibbs, said "he would"—"and a comrade asked the woman in whose dwelling he had expired if he could be allowed to have a last look at his comrade before he was buried. The woman assented, but with the proviso that when he left

the room in which the corpse lay he would promise to shut the door, for she said that already that morning her cat had twice dragged him into the passage."

One of the earliest matters which I took up after I came to the Arras front was that of underground protection for the troops. I had had experience of a part of the line held by the British where the nature of the soil did not lend itself to the provision of dug-outs, though the beaver-like Germans, even in unfavourable ground, managed to provide themselves with shell-proof protection. But on the front I now held the subsoil was limestone, and many, if not all the houses had been constructed from blocks of chalk. I had been a little over a month at Noyelle Vion when, owing to inquiries which I had caused to be made, an inhabitant of Arras stated that he knew of a tunnel that ran from that town to Vimy Ridge, and another to the village of Beaurains, a suburb which was in the hands of the Germans opposite one of the divisions of my corps. Although there were indications of earlier excavations where the man pointed out, there proved, so far as could be ascertained, to be no actual tunnels. As I was anxious to develop a scheme whereby a large proportion of my infantry could be kept underground immediately prior to launching an attack, I applied to the Third Army for a mining company, and not long after I was allotted the 2nd New Zealand Mining Company, commanded by Captain Vickermann, which did excellent work, to be referred to later on.

Another subject which comes to my mind as I write is that of foreign decorations, many of which arrived at the headquarters of the Expeditionary Force, whence a few found their way to those who did not pass most of their time in offices. One day when I arrived at the headquarters of the 14th Light Division, which was commanded by Victor Couper, I found him laughing at something which he had just received. On inquiring what it was he explained that he had been selected, for no reason he could imagine, for the Second Class of the Montenegrin Order of Danilo. He had, he said, never been near that country and he had only a vague idea where it was, since geography was not his strong suit. He had, however, some years earlier seen in London both 'The Merry Widow' and 'The Dollar Princess,' so perhaps that had qualified him for the distinction. Couper had a humorous turn of mind,

and I enjoyed my almost daily visits to his headquarters. He would never take Allenby seriously, in which he probably showed his wisdom.

There were many tales about the latter, most of which I have forgotten, and some of them were associated with his rare visits to the front-line. Once when he went with me to near Hooze in the Ypres salient the Germans opened fire on us, a proceeding for which he seemed to blame me. When I was with the Sixth Corps his arrival in the trenches used to be announced by a special signal, known as the B.O.B. (beware of the bull, a variation of the better-known S.O.S.), and these letters were passed along the front which he was expected to visit. On one occasion he sharply reproved an officer for something of a trivial nature with which he found fault. The officer in question, anxious to display his zeal to amend matters, instead of silently accepting the rebuke, unwisely said, "Very good, sir." The Bull, like his prototype in a Spanish arena, rounded on him instantaneously and flung at the offender the retort, "I want none of your b——y approbation!" The element of the sergeant-major which, with doubtless good qualities, was part of Allenby's make-up, used to display itself during visits of inspection and was expressed by the Nosey-Parker-like interest which he took in such trivialities as the oiling of the spare barrel of a machine-gun. Another matter which gave him a thrill was when he discovered a bandolier of small-arms ammunition hanging against the side of the parapet of a trench, where it was conveniently disposed for immediate use instead of in its box, whence it could not be quickly withdrawn. There were other trivialities which did not affect efficiency and which in his exalted position he might have ignored, as other generals under whom I had served would have done, but he could not resist the temptation to have a finger in the pie. When he was known to be in what was called "bullish" mood it was wiser silently to accept rebuffs, and having the example of Keir before me (Toreador No. 1), I early learned how to avoid becoming No. 2 of the species.

One day at the end of 1916 Mr Arthur Henderson, who was then a member of the Cabinet, as well as John Buchan and some other Members of Parliament, arrived at my headquarters. Mr Henderson expressed surprise that compulsory

service had been accepted almost without demur; and I felt, as I do still, that the members of the House of Commons are sometimes strangely out of touch with the feelings of the man in the street. Speaking of Winston Churchill, he said that he did not trust him and that he had made a great blunder in not remaining at the front, as his friend Jack Seely had done. On that matter I had no opinion to offer, but I thought that Churchill, who had a keen eye to his own interests, possessed the wisdom to realise what was best to advance them.

Following this visit I dined one night with the Press correspondents at the Château de Tramicourt, near the site of the great battle of Agincourt, where that evening the only other guest was Lord Northcliffe. He was not so pessimistic as when we had met two years earlier, and he made no secret of his pride at the power he exerted through the Press, not always wisely, I thought, when I remembered how he and Bonar Law—who should have known better—had made it impossible for my cousin, R. B. Haldane, to serve in the Coalition Government. In referring to Churchill he said that he was “finished” and we should hear no more of him. Here I disagreed with him, for, apart from my knowledge of Churchill, I had noticed that a Member of Parliament can go to almost any length without bringing his career to a finish for, like Tennyson’s “Brook,” he runs on for ever.

As the New Year of 1917 approached I arranged to give an entertainment for the children of Noyelle Vion, many of whose fathers had been taken prisoners early in the war, and who had had no treat of any kind for long. The fête took place on the 1st January, and thanks to my sister Alice and many friends at home who sent dolls and other gifts, it was a rousing success. I wanted the young ones, some two hundred in number, to have a lively recollection of the days when British troops had been billeted in the village, and I do not think that they will readily forget that New Year’s Day. Besides a magic lantern which came from Paris, a little play which one of my staff contributed, and a bran pie, there were other side-shows. The lantern may have been rather out of date in these days of cinematographs, but that could not be helped, and it had the advantage of representing many of the scenes which as a small boy had delighted me. Perhaps



there are still some of my contemporaries who may recall the representation of the picnic at which an inquisitive tiger intervenes only to get trapped in a barrel, and the bearded sleeper who seemed to have had no difficulty in swallowing mouse after mouse which disturbed his slumbers. These and other items appeared still to hold sway over the youngsters of a later date, and the remnants of the feast, having been distributed in paper bags, they went to their respective homes and no doubt dreamt of fairy queens and tigers and other animals.

While I commanded the Sixth Corps there was in it an exceedingly able artillery officer, Colonel Fawcett, who had been called up from the reserve, and in the years preceding the war had done much exploration in the region near the Amazon. The travellers' tales which, when he dined with me, he would relate, were frankly discredited by my staff who were present, but I believed what he recounted, and in this I happened to be right. Some months later an officer, who had accompanied him on one of his expeditions, corroborated all that he had told us and showed us that he had not exaggerated the story of his exploits.

At dinner one evening I asked Fawcett if he knew a film called "The Unknown World," which some years before I had seen in London. He replied that it was based on a book of that name which Conan Doyle, whom he knew, had published after stealing his thunder, and the fact seemed to give him little satisfaction.

Soon after the Armistice was signed Fawcett left the corps and went home and, after being demobilised, arranged for further research in South America. This time he took with him his son; but both of them and other members of the party perished, probably at the hands of the savage tribesmen who frequented the region through which they passed and whose arms were bows and poisoned arrows.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### THE BATTLE OF ARRAS.

I HAVE mentioned that when I took command of the Sixth Corps I made inquiries regarding underground shelter in the Arras area, and I had been allotted a New Zealand Mining Company. As soon as it arrived work began, and I hoped that it would be completed by the date when the projected attack on the Germans would take place. Exploration had shown that there were numerous caves under the suburbs on the eastern side of the town, and blocks of chalk from these had been employed for the building of most of the houses. It was now proposed to connect these caves and drive one or more tunnels right up to our front-line underneath the rows of houses. I knew that when the French were holding the front on which the corps now was, as the only entrance to the town from the west was a narrow gateway, their communications had been difficult. It would therefore be of great advantage to run a tunnel under the town; and work was started at the Petite Place, thence carried under the Grande Place and partly along the main sewer until the suburbs were approached. Thence through a series of caves, which were connected by galleries, the necessary mining was continued until we were under our own front trenches. At this point, as the noise of digging might reach the ears of the Germans, great care had to be exercised to work as quietly as possible. At the ends of the galleries they were sloped upwards to the surface of the ground in no-man's-land, where arrangements were made for placing at their exits machine-guns, which at the proper time would sweep with their fire the German trenches and save our men much loss.

Though I here anticipate what took place later I may say that on the day before the battle I visited for the last time the scene of so much underground labour. Starting from the Petite Place I passed under the Grande Place and thence

through the sewer, which was roomy and, owing to the water which flushed it, quite non-odoriferous. On arriving at one of the tunnels which led farther forward I was reminded of the Metropolitan Railway near South Kensington, for the sides of the excavation were lined with metal pipes, some carrying the means for lighting the three miles or so of tunneling and others water for the troops and headquarters of brigades and divisions, which would be assembled in the caves on either side of the tunnels. At certain places ramps were made by means of which those who were to carry out the attack could be got out of the caves and into the front trenches shortly before zero hour. I felt some qualms at the thought that should the Germans get wind of these underground preparations they might forestall us and catch much of the Sixth Corps like rats in a trap. As, however, they had not taken any prisoners for some time it was probable that they would have no knowledge of our subterranean activities.

Besides cover for combatants, provision was made at a distance of only some eight hundred yards from the front-line for fifteen hundred wounded lying-down cases, so that operations could be performed on stricken men very soon after they sustained hurt—an important matter, I was informed, in abdominal injuries. In addition to this refuge for casualties there was another place, named Aladdin's Cave, rather farther back, which was so arranged as to take sixty pack-mules with supplies of food and water which could be sent to the fighting troops with a minimum of delay.

As may be conjectured, the preparations for the battle of Arras covered several months and were truly meticulous. Each week, and nearer the date fixed for the battle, daily, I held a conference of the senior officers who were intimately concerned with what was about to happen. By this means one could ascertain what had been done and what was left to be achieved. By the beginning of April everything was ready and it was settled that the attack should take place on the 9th. Two days earlier Sir Douglas Haig and his chief staff officer came to Noyelle Vion and I was asked whether it would matter if the attack were postponed for seventy-two hours. As I did not wish to keep the infantry immured in the caves for more than forty-eight hours at the utmost I replied that a postponement of twenty-four hours would be

as much as I should care to accept. After a few words with Sir Douglas I was ordered to inform the First Army on our left that the operation would not be deferred and would take place on the arranged date.

As had so often happened in earlier battles the weather on the morning of the 9th was, for the season of the year, exceptionally bad, but by nightfall my three divisions had forced their way through formidable defences, though they did not manage to get as far as I had hoped. The objective on which I had set my heart was the village of Monchy-le-Preux, which stood on high ground between four and five miles distant from our front-line. Before it could be reached the last German line must be taken. This was out of range of our guns, and though we had a share of such tanks as were available they were insufficient in number and several broke down.

As I wished to be with the troops in the final advance I had sent my horses to Arras; but the conflicting reports which arrived during the day compelled me to remain at my headquarters, which were at some distance from the battle-front. On the 10th, however, I tore myself away from the office and rode and walked to the line where the troops had been checked on the evening of the 9th. I had been led to believe that Monchy was in our hands, but as I got near the place, coming under rifle-fire, it was evident that the report I had received was incorrect; and not until the following morning did it come into our possession, too late to bring about a complete break-through of the German front before reinforcements could reach it. On the whole, there was no reason to be dissatisfied with the progress made, and laudatory messages arrived from the army commander and the Commander-in-Chief.

The battle dragged on for several days and caused heavy casualties; for the French were in difficulties and in no shape for many weeks to share the burden that now fell on the shoulders of the British. Meantime I had moved forward to Duisans, where I was much nearer Arras, and while there the King's Birthday Gazette was published and in it Allenby's name appeared as general. A day or two after, when he came there, I congratulated him on the promotion, and as he muttered something about my having been overlooked I had the pleasure of telling him that for nearly three years I had enjoyed nothing

more than regular mentions in despatches. On the day to which I refer I received a letter from the chief of the Belgian Mission that King Albert had conferred on me the Grand Cross of the Order of the Crown, by which it appeared that the monarch of an allied nation had rewarded me before my own King; and a year later the same thing was repeated when I was made Commander of the Legion of Honour.

Before this it had happened that several of our gun ammunition dumps had been exploded by shells from the German artillery. This was almost unavoidable, for time and labour had not allowed us to place them underground in comparative safety; but Allenby would not accept excuses and entirely overlooked the difficulties which had to be overcome in keeping the ammunition safe from enemy interference. I was therefore frankly pleased when a tremendous explosion occurred in a village near Duisans, to which there ran a branch line that had been made. A train-load of heavy shells was struck by a German projectile, with the result that not only the whole freight and the stores in sheds were destroyed, but the village itself was razed to the ground. As usual, the blame was laid on my artillery commander, but on this occasion I had the satisfaction of pointing out that the fault lay in another direction, for the matter was an army and not a corps one.

Three days later I and other corps commanders were ordered to go to his headquarters, where we were informed that he had been appointed to command the forces in Palestine. I do not think that anyone regretted the prospect of his departure, and I was delighted to hear that he was to be succeeded by my old friend, Julian Byng.

One day soon after the battle of Arras had come to an end one of my brigade commanders, Cator of the Scots Guards, told me that in going his rounds he had noticed in a dug-out, which was occupied by Sir Charles Lowther who commanded my corps cavalry squadron, a nice mirror, and he advised me to take possession of it. This dug-out had been the quarters of a German officer prior to the battle, during the first day of which some of our men had seen a woman being conducted thence to a place of less danger, and when our troops captured the ground a woman's shoe was picked up near the dug-out. When I visited Lowther he was out, so leaving a note to say that there were two mirrors where he was living and that

one would doubtless suffice for his needs I walked off with it. This mirror is the only piece of loot I acquired during the war, the return of which to the owner of the house whence it had been removed would have been impossible, and it now hangs in my drawing-room. When I think of the acquisition of this Louis XVI. mirror I recall one day when in the suburbs east of Arras I noticed that a light railway had been run by my engineers through the ground floor of a dwelling, and in the same house was a solid concrete observation tower which had been constructed before the battle and which overlooked the German front. I thought of the astonishment of the owner of the house when some day he returned to it and found in the drawing-room this solid construction, and the dining-room on the ground floor traversed by a railway line ; while beneath the dwelling, below the cellars, there was a passage-way which the tunnellers had made to our front-line.

From the Arras front we moved to a place called Bihucourt, which existed only in name, for it was situated where the Germans had razed everything to the ground some time earlier when they fell back in order to shorten their line. While there Lochiel, who was, I think, in general charge of the various detachments of the Lovat Scouts, paid me a visit, bringing with him his piper, Norman M'Rae, to whose stirring notes I had often danced reels at the Lochaber Gathering. While at Bihucourt he was good enough to refresh my memory of many of my favourite tunes. Among the Scouts I had been interested to find some who, though I had not stalked with them, knew stalkers and gillies at deer forests where I had shot in days of peace.

In the same year in August a company of United States engineers was attached to my corps for the purpose of laying light railways, which we lacked and badly needed, and they had not been long with me before their absence of discipline became noticeable. One day my light-railway officer when going his rounds found the men playing poker, while the non-commissioned officer in charge was fast asleep. After getting work started again he went away, but passing the same place later he found that the game had been resumed and that the N.C.O. was now taking a hand in it. I should mention that the U.S.A. railway engineers were enlisted civilians, many of whom did not know how to handle a rifle,

and they were merely behaving as they did in peace-time. This same company, at the time of the great German attack of the following March, took a share in warding off the danger, for their railway work had had to cease. They begged to be given rifles and, besides participating in the fighting, helped to remove ammunition and other material which otherwise might have fallen into the enemy's hands.

Besides this American unit I had attached to me in October two U.S.A. major-generals, Morton and Clement Edwards, who spent some days at my headquarters and at those of two of my divisions in order that before bringing their troops into the line they might learn something of trench warfare. The first of these general officers struck me as much too old for his command, while the other was more active than his compatriot. While with me I did what I could to instil into their minds some knowledge of the kind of warfare that faced them, but they paid little attention. They seemed to be bound by earlier experiences in Cuba, and do what I would the conversation would get round to that campaign; and they talked of commanding corps before they had led a division in the field. I gave them some written notes regarding what I thought might be useful to them, but I feared that the troops which they would lead must suffer at the hands of such inexperienced generals. Later on I met a number of their fellow-countrymen, generals and staff, with whom we were on friendly terms, but some of them were so cocksure of everything that it seemed useless to hope to enlighten them on military matters. Of all the officers of my corps who came into contact with the Americans, General Ironside struck me as far more understanding than any others.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI—THE GERMAN ATTACK IN MARCH.

I PASS on to the period of the heavy fighting in the Passchendaele region, in which I had no share. The unwisdom of doggedly pressing that part of the German front for many weeks in unfavourable weather was no doubt obvious to the British Commander-in-Chief, but at that period of the war the French were on their beam-ends, and at all costs the Germans had to be discouraged from throwing their strength against our crippled ally. Had they been allowed to do so the British might have found themselves bereft of that ally, the road to Paris would have been opened, and all possibility of continuing the struggle on land might have been at an end. The situation was desperate, and it was presumably on the urgent appeal of Pétain that Haig threw himself into the breach, only to receive, on the one hand, neither thanks nor acknowledgment from an ungenerous ally and, on the other, abuse from an ignorant Prime Minister, who could not be trusted with a complete disclosure of the actual facts lest they should find their way where profit to our disadvantage of them might have been taken. Haig kept his counsel and bore with him to the grave the secret of Passchendaele. It must, however, have dawned on him in that exceptionally wet autumn that a distraction on another part of the front was desirable, and the first news I had of it was one day when General Byng inquired if there was any ground in my area suitable for the assembly of a large number of tanks, the presence of which could be concealed from the enemy. As my front was absolutely devoid of cover of any kind I had reluctantly to tell him that so far as the Sixth Corps was concerned such an operation as was contemplated was out of the question. A day or two later, after reflecting on what he had said, I put forward a proposal which would serve as a distraction and



possibly have the effect of diverting enemy troops from where the main attack would take place. I informed him that I was prepared to assault the Hindenburg support line, which other corps had earlier failed to capture, for to do so might draw the enemy's attention from the main attack, which would be directed towards Cambrai.

The proposal which I made was the outcome of inquiries addressed to General David Campbell. This officer, who had served under me when in command of the 21st Division, had earlier failed in an effort to capture the Hindenburg line. I was aware that under it was a tunnel in which the Germans used to keep concealed their troops during the bombardment preceding our attacks, and it now appeared that no sooner had we captured the line than the enemy emerged from his cover through various exits and, taking our troops in flank, forced them to lose what they had won. I applied to the Air Force for photographs which had been taken of that portion of my front, and the exits in question were found to be marked on them at regular intervals. Armed with this information the plan of attack was arranged to include a concentration of artillery fire on those points at which the German garrison would have to emerge from the tunnel in order to take the attackers at a disadvantage. This arrangement, as proved later, was effective, and we captured quite a number of the garrison which remained below while the exits were blocked first by shrapnel fire and then by men armed with hand-grenades.

As the operation would not take place for a little time, and strenuous days were sure to follow, I went on leave, and on the 1st November encountered the Prince of Wales in Sifton Praed's shop in St James's Street, where he was buying maps; and for the last time had a talk with him. He was in high spirits and told me that he was soon to go to Italy on the staff of Lord Cavan, who would have with him the 23rd and 41st Divisions.

After my return to France, General Byng came to see me and told me that the battle would begin on the 20th November, and he seemed to be confident of success.

The morning of that date was dull and it looked as if we should have rain. At 6.20 my guns opened fire, and before 9 o'clock the tunnel trench and the ground east of Bullecourt were in our hands. The attack had been carried

out by the 3rd and 16th Divisions in admirable fashion. We took 10 officers and 586 other ranks prisoners, besides one officer and 122 other ranks wounded, while 237 German dead were counted. Our own losses were not slight, for they amounted approximately to 837 killed, wounded, and missing.

I shall say nothing regarding the main operation farther south. It opened successfully, but it soon became apparent that there was no prospect of a break-through, for the number of troops available or employed was insufficient, though when necessity demanded more were forthcoming.

In this action I have always felt that had General Hubert Gough been in command of our cavalry instead of at the head of an army the result would have been different. The occasion was one which demanded a dashing leader of horse, and never again did such a chance offer itself of crashing through the German front before reinforcements could be brought up to restore the situation.

After the battle of Cambrai, which was a disappointing affair, where a great opportunity was lost, nothing happened for some months, but the Germans lost no time in bringing numerous divisions from the Russian front, and it was obvious that before long the British line would be subjected to the most serious effort to break through it that had so far been experienced.

On the 1st January 1918 my name appeared in the King's Birthday Gazette to be K.C.B., the recognition of three years and two months' continuous service at the front. Although it is a mistake to look a gift horse in the mouth, the reward came too late to give the recipient satisfaction, and I did not go home to be knighted till the middle of February, when I was ordered to appear at Buckingham Palace. My sisters, rightly foreseeing that I would run the risk of being knighted under a Christian name other than that by which I was best known, advised me to be on my guard at the crucial moment. When on my knee before the King an official read out my name as "James" I pointed out that that was one which I never used. The official in question seemed to be annoyed and said that the War Office was responsible; but at this point the King intervened and said, "You shall be knighted by any name you choose." That settled the matter and I was duly knighted as Aylmer.

On the 18th of the month the new infantry organisation for divisions was ordered to be introduced—that is to say, each of the three brigades of those formations was to consist of three battalions instead of four. In consequence I had to part with several good units, the loss of which made the arrangements for holding divisional fronts more difficult. It was, however, rumoured that the abstracted units would be replaced by others from the U.S. Army.

A week later I had an interesting visitor in the person of General Smuts, who had come to France to get a general view of our opponents' line and that held by the British Army. Like Balak of old, I took him to several high places whence he could get a good view of the German line, though none of the garrison of the trenches was visible, and at one point we were seen and treated to a few shells. It was obvious to me that the general had what is known as "a good eye for country," which was to be expected from one who had gone through the experiences of the lengthy Boer War, and his eyesight was remarkably keen.

During our walk, which lasted for some hours, he talked of my cousin, Lord Haldane, of whom he had a high opinion, and remarked that history would completely vindicate him, for a clever man was always the subject of attack because he had ideas in advance of those around him. He added that my relative's references to the Germans—as a stimulant in getting things done, education improved, and so on—instead of being accepted at their proper value had only had the effect of causing his fellow-countrymen annoyance.

As the date approached on which the Germans, now in great strength on the western front, might be expected to attack, the cries of "wolf" from rearwards became more frequent. At this time I was daily in the corps front-line or in other important parts of the area which I guarded, assuring myself that should the Germans risk an attack they would be certain of getting a warm reception. It was noticeable that guns were being moved and concealed in holes which had been caused by the explosion of heavy shells, and at night the rumbling of ponderous tractors bringing up artillery made itself audible. One day when I was in the front-line and my guns were busy with counter-battery work I noticed several dumps of enemy ammunition exploding from their accurate

fire. Another day it was stated that my corps alone had expended nearly 1300 tons of ammunition, but there was now no shortage of shells, which were arriving daily at the rate of 700 tons.

We kept on raiding the opponents' trenches, as it was important to extract information of their intentions through the disclosures of prisoners; and on the night of the 18th-19th the 59th Division, which had joined the corps, rushed a post in front of Bullecourt and captured a man of the 16th Bavarian Division. Under examination he stated that he knew nothing about a coming attack, and as he seemed stupid it was wrongly assumed that he was speaking the truth. As, however, he was regarded with suspicion he was passed on to the Third Army, where there were special means, some quite ingenious though not of the third-degree order, for extracting information from prisoners. On the 20th, as the result of being put in touch with one of our men who spoke German faultlessly, our captive began to display definite signs of intelligence and exultingly stated to his listener that though he had undergone three examinations he had disclosed nothing of consequence. He then went on to confide to his pseudo-fellow-countryman that an attack had been arranged to take place on the 21st March, which proved to be correct.

Before that date more and more guns were being moved forward daily by the enemy; and we became aware that he had assembled on the western front a stupendous force of no less than 189 divisions—about 80 of which were in reserve—and I noted in my diary of the 18th March "a goodly number to tire out."

The 21st March came and at 5.8 A.M. the cloud burst and the Germans began a heavy bombardment which extended from Rheims to Bullecourt, the latter place being on the Sixth Corps front. I will not enter into details of this great battle. Handicapped by fog and insufficiently strong defences, and above all by inadequate strength, the Fifth Army on the right of the Third was forced to give way, and this caused a considerable lengthening of the front of the latter, since it was obliged to swing back and conform so as to avoid a gap.

As I had anticipated, the Germans, who knew our weak points as well as we did, broke through the front where my corps and its right-hand neighbour adjoined, and thereafter

touch could only be maintained with difficulty. As the struggle took its course the troops became exhausted and the situation, in spite of reinforcements, graver, more and more strained, and at times even precarious. An important ridge on my left, called Henin Hill, which I had last visited on the 20th, was lost, and this had the effect of bringing under enemy observation the road which, on our side of the hill, ran from Arras to Bapaume. So long as both Monchy-le-Preux and Henin Hill were in our possession the road in question was of value as a lateral communication, but the loss of the hill made the continued occupation of Monchy unnecessary, and indeed a danger, for it was now *en l'air*.

I knew that neither General Byng nor Sir Douglas Haig would willingly relinquish possession of that village on a hill which it had cost me some trouble to capture in March 1916, but if anyone was to regret having to do so it would be myself and my troops. The matter was urgent, and twice in twenty-four hours I pointed out the necessity for doing so and that what I proposed should be carried out speedily.

At length, on the night of the 22nd, consent was reluctantly given. By that time it was too late for a withdrawal to be made in regular and orderly fashion, for the Germans were close to the front which I wished to vacate, though not actually at Monchy, which was held by the corps on my left. I now telephoned to General Deverell who, with my old division, held that part of the front and gave him the necessary instructions. Realising the importance of secrecy, and aware that the brigade commander whose troops would have to fall back had served in India and spoke Urdu, he addressed him in that language on the telephone, for there was not time to send written orders. He was directed to leave the ground he held, bringing away such trench stores and equipment as could be carried by the men, exercise precautions to keep the enemy unaware of what was in progress, and take post on a line farther to the rear.

The result of this move and the withdrawal of the neighbouring division from Monchy had the effect I anticipated. When next day the Germans attacked the village, which they no doubt expected to find tenaciously held, they struck a blow in the air, for the original defenders were by this time firmly posted in the old German third line. The enemy must have

been puzzled, a delay would ensue in issuing instructions for the next move, and as a result the city of Arras, the capture of which formed an important part of Ludendorff's plan, was never taken. I feel sure that but for the combined action of the 3rd Division and that on its left the story might have been a different one, and I was confirmed in this opinion when, in 'The Times' of the 5th November 1918, I read what the Berlin correspondent of the 'Nieuwes Rotterdamsche Courant' stated in an examination of the failure of Ludendorff's great offensive. This was as follows: "It has been said, and I am for special reasons able to confirm it, that the resistance of the British on March 27th [*sic* 28th] near Arras caused the failure of the German campaign."

We had passed through anxious days, for it seemed at times that the wherewithal to hold the ground between my corps and the sea would probably prove insufficient. Here it was a case of who would last the longer, and the British soldier in such circumstances is not easy to beat.

In a battle such as we had gone through a commander can do little more than send inspiring messages to those who are in the thick of the fight, visit subordinate commanders whenever possible, and distribute reinforcements, as they become available, to the best possible advantage.

During the bitter struggle it had been a pleasure to serve under a commander like General Byng, who not only appreciated the difficulties with which one was faced but did all in his power to help. On the 24th I received a copy of an order by the Commander-in-Chief, in which he expressed his appreciation of the work done by the Sixth Corps, its commander, staff and subordinate commanders, and the way in which they had conducted the battle. Nevertheless, in my opinion, if ever there was what is known as a "soldier's battle" that between the 21st March and the several days that followed offered a typical example. It rarely happened that I had to intervene, and generally when I did so I found that what I wished had already been anticipated.

The day after the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief's order he came himself to my headquarters and said that the battle which we had just fought was a corps commander's battle. He added that I had been for a long time a temporary lieutenant-general and that he intended to recommend me for

permanent promotion ; but, he said, that the matter did not rest with him but with the War Office. I thanked him and ventured to say that for some reason unknown to me I did not seem to find favour with some person or persons there. To this he replied that that was not his fault. The recommendation, as I anticipated, did not meet with approval, and not long after, when several officers were promoted to be lieutenant-generals, my name was not among them. Some time later it came to my knowledge that Haig had told a friend of mine that on several occasions his recommendations had been ignored by the War Office in favour of officers other than those he had mentioned, and I understand that a record of that fact is to be found in his diary, which, of course, has not been made public.

Before I close this chapter I must say a word regarding what happened to one of the Lovat Scouts, of whom, as already mentioned, I had several detachments with my corps. On the 24th April, when talking to Corporal Stevenson, he told me that on the day the German attack began he had had a narrow escape from capture. He had posted himself in a tree so as to get good observation for as long as possible ; and from that point of vantage he watched the Germans getting nearer and nearer to and beyond St Leger, a village on the corps front, while telephoning to the rear how their advance was progressing. So absorbed did he become in what was going on that at length he realised that if he stayed where he was he must be captured or shot. Having decided that flight was imperative, for the enemy was coming on quickly and was only some two or three hundred yards away from his perch, he slipped down the side of the trunk farthest from hostile view and, like the Laird of Summertrees in 'Red-gauntlet,' rolled over and over down the slope behind the tree till he got to the bottom, when he took to his heels and ran for safety. He managed to get away, and what seemed to cause him most annoyance was that in his gyratory motions he lost both his Glengarry bonnet and steel helmet.

I had found these Scouts particularly useful during the period preceding the attack. One and all were skilled in the use of the "glass." They kept a close watch on the enemy's front and, besides reporting changes in his gun positions,

detected other items that might have escaped the eyes of men less keen and well-trained.

As a postscript I may add that, though during some strenuous days and nights we had been forced back farther than I liked, the Germans failed to make a clean breach between us and the French. My own corps had fought stoutly, more particularly my old division under Devereux, and the 40th, commanded by John Ponsonby of the Coldstream Guards, both of whom I urged should be promoted.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

### FROM THE GREAT GERMAN ATTACK TO THE ARMISTICE.

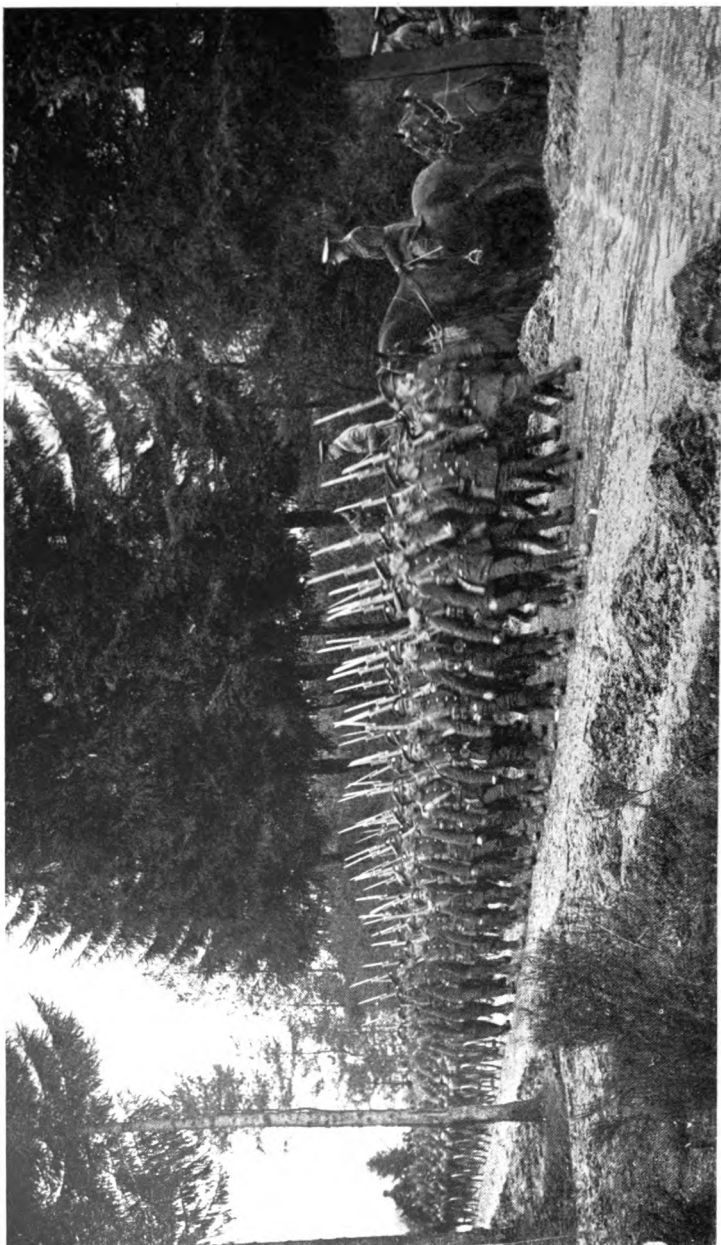
As the billows and breakers gradually subside after a great storm, so a calm began to spread over that part of the British front which had lately been the scene of much disturbance.

The time was approaching when we were to turn the tables on the Germans, and in preparation for this I moved, on the 12th August, from Noyelle Vion to the old castle of Lucheux. While there John Sargent and Professor Tonks of the Slade School, who were exercising their art near Arras, dined one night, as also did John Tweed, my sculptor friend, who was working at my corps training school some distance from the front.

During that month the King paid one of his visits to the troops, and I was bidden to tea with the army commander. The King had known the 1st Battalion of my regiment in his earlier days when he was serving at Malta under his uncle, the Duke of Edinburgh, who was then Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean. Several of the officers belonging to the battalion were known to the King by their nicknames, and he laughed heartily when I mentioned one officer whose soubriquet was more suited to the smoking-room than the drawing-room.

Among those at Byng's headquarters who received decorations on this occasion was a clergyman of the name—a very appropriate one—of Hardy, who had already won the D.S.O. and M.C., to which was now added the Victoria Cross. After the presentation I overheard His Majesty, who was solicitous about the safety of this gallant minister of the Church of England, say to General Byng that he wished steps to be taken to keep him from passing so much time in dangerous places. What measures were taken I do not know, but I heard that before the end of the war this recipient of so many decora-





Sixth Corps entering Germany, 11th December 1918.

[To face p. 357.

tions for gallantry managed to evade them and laid down his life for his friends.

At tea the King remarked to me, no doubt thinking of several officers commanding divisions and other senior officers who had lost their lives at the front, that it was quite wrong for them to have been in the front trenches. I refrained from remark, but it crossed my mind how the presence of the Duke of Wellington in the thick of the fight at Waterloo, where all of his staff were killed or wounded, had done more to win victory than anything else, and of senior naval commanders who took the same risks as their bluejackets.

We had now arrived at the time when the attack was about to be launched which would lead to the downfall of the Germans. On the 21st August there was a thick yellow fog which recalled London in the month of November and made the maintenance in direction of the troops of the Third Army as they advanced to the attack difficult. At first all went well, but at 10.40, when the sun burst through the mist, it had the effect of vaporising the contents of the mustard-gas shells with which the enemy had showered the 2nd Division of my corps. That division, having made some headway, was resting before resuming the advance and, without warning, a considerable number of officers and men were "gassed" and temporarily placed *hors de combat*. As the unfortunate victims were being helped, practically blinded, by their comrades to a field ambulance, John Sargent happened to arrive on the scene. Shortly before he had told me that he had been commissioned to paint a picture which should be typical of the war, and I had suggested "tanks," they being the latest military engine and a novel feature of it. He had not, as he told me later, made up his mind, but when he saw the string of men of the 2nd Division being helped along the trench-boards to the hospital tents he decided that he had before him what he had been seeking. Those who may have seen at the War Museum this work of art, which I think is called "Gassed," may be interested to know its genesis.

The lack of tanks during the final phase of the war was a great handicap, for all we had were a few of the lighter kind, known as "Whippets." I had done my best to encourage the production of tanks and had been in correspondence with the Adjutant-General at the War Office, who was disposed to

assist with the necessary men for their manufacture. Those we had were worn out and frequently broke down, and though the late Chief Scout, my cousin, Lord Somers, who was attached to my corps, did his best with the few available, they were not of much use during the final advance.

We gradually got near the Canal du Nord, which, though not quite completed and not filled with water, was a formidable obstacle, being a wide ditch some forty feet below the surrounding country. It happened that with the corps at this time was the 62nd Division which, with the help of tanks, had captured the village of Havrincourt, on the German side of the canal, many months earlier, but which place had changed hands at the time of the March attack. This division was now ordered to retake the village, but no tanks could be spared for the attack. Their absence was not looked upon with favour, and moreover it was uncertain, as there was to be no preliminary bombardment, whether the German barbed wire would be penetrable or not. As the commander of the division, a brigade of which would carry out the attack, had misgivings regarding the prospects of success, I did what I could to give him confidence. Early one morning before it was light I went with an aide-de-camp as far towards the obstacle as I could creep unseen, but the tall thistles and weeds that had sprung up unrestrained made it impossible to be certain how far it would check progress. As it turned out, the fears proved to be groundless, the wire was not so impenetrable as imagined, and the division won its objective and added a feather to its cap. On the day following its success, Sir Douglas Haig appeared at my camp and expressed his satisfaction with what the Sixth Corps had been doing; and I rather gathered from what he said that he hoped to finish the war before the end of 1918.

When during the attack I had driven to the headquarters of the brigade that had captured Havrincourt, while passing along a hollow lane a 9.2-in. gun was fired directly overhead and much of the glass of my car was smashed. My companion, Robert Elliot-Lockhart, a former Scots Grey officer, and I escaped injury beyond a few scratches, but that was the last time that I made use of the vehicle. When, soon after I was given the command of the Sixth Corps, the car which I was then using broke down, General Sillem kindly came to the

rescue when I applied to the Third Army for another. He sent me his own 60-h.p. Daimler, which had a capacious body, but with too much glass about it when in the neighbourhood of bursting shells. At the same time he wrote that the car was "altogether too pretentious for the likes of me. It requires a corps commander to set it off; but it is very comfortable and quite fast enough. It was built for one of the big Brighton hotels, and Gaby de Lys was once photographed in it; so it has quite a history and I am told it cannot be shocked." Perhaps Gaby is a name unknown to the present generation of my fellow-countrymen and women, but in her day she was notorious on the music-hall stage in France, and such fantastic head-dresses as she affected have not been seen since.

In one of the last great attacks which followed the crossing of the canal the Guards Division, which, as mentioned earlier, had joined the corps in the preceding March, did extremely well, and I had the pleasure of recommending Lord Gort, who was in command of the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, for the Victoria Cross. A good deal earlier, when training his battalion, I had noticed that his methods were noticeably in advance of those of other commanding officers of infantry units, and his officers, as always with the Guards, showed that they had been well trained.

As we continued making our way forward we arrived at that part of the country near Le Cateau, east of which place I had been with my brigade in 1914, and reached Solesmes, on the outskirts of which I had held ground to cover the retreat of some of the troops from Mons. As I thought it possible that the Germans might have confined the French inhabitants to the cellars of the houses, which would be penetrable by heavy shells, I ordered that during the bombardment preceding the assault only field-guns were to be used. This may have added somewhat to our casualties, but it saved the inhabitants from suffering, and they showed their joy at our arrival when the pipers of the 1st Gordon Highlanders marched through the town at the head of the relieving force.

The day after our occupation I was told that one of our cyclists, who in civil life was an organist and had gone into the church, had started playing the "Marseillaise." This so excited the verger, who for four years had not heard the French

National Anthem, that he seized a pitchfork and unless some of our men had come to the rescue would have made short work of a German prisoner who was sweeping the street outside the building.

At this period of the war there were plenty of rumours of an armistice, and I did all I could to discourage talk on the subject, for I had noticed during the Russo-Japanese War how quickly all keenness to continue fighting evaporated as soon as there was a hint of peace, and the same was to be the case on the western front.

On the 30th October Byng came to see me after returning from a conference of army commanders which had just been held by General Haig. He said that the terms which Marshal Foch was offering the Germans were so severe that he did not think that they would be accepted. I differed with him and said that the Germans were at their last gasp and would accept any terms we chose to impose. Foch knew that the French Army had reached the end of its tether, and when I met Monsieur Paul Cambon, the French ambassador in London, soon after, I was interested to hear that the former had been given a free hand as to the terms of the armistice and was responsible that a final and knock-out blow, such as I had hoped for, had not been delivered.

On the date when the armistice was announced I had reached Maubeuge, which we had retaken on the 9th November, and while there news came of the flight of the Kaiser to Holland. We were now told which corps were to form the army of occupation, and it did not take long to realise that those first to go home, both officers and men, would pick up the plums, whether civil or military.

To me it was a cause of regret that our advance was to terminate at the Rhine, for I felt strongly that only by occupying Germany for a period and showing ourselves as conquerors to the inhabitants could they be brought to understand that they had been defeated. One day at Cologne I remarked to Sir Douglas Haig that I was certain that the fiction that the Germans had not been beaten in the field prevailed since the troops had been allowed to march back with their guns and rifles, and on their way home had been fêted as heroes. He warmly disagreed with me and said that the German Army knew full well that it had been defeated. This was no doubt

true, but the fiction to the contrary remained in the minds of the population, and twenty years later Hitler was to make capital of it, as we were to learn to our cost.

At the time of the armistice it was said that we were not in a position to invade Germany, but that I question, for the enemy had become so demoralised that we might have done so almost without opposition. There were those who held that the Ardennes was a dangerous obstacle to further advance, but I refuse to believe that argument, for when it is a question of a forest he who attacks has an advantage over the defender, for the latter cannot tell from which direction he may be assaulted.

It seemed to me that the great struggle through which we had passed had been, as it were, a prolonged battle, and that it had ended without a pursuit, so that most of the effect of the four-years' efforts had been sacrificed. That had happened in other wars; generals were tired and glad to arrive at a conclusion, and, unlike great captains, such as Napoleon or Nelson, were content with less than the whole. In consequence, future generations would be compelled to draw the sword once more to finish a half-done job.

The time had arrived when I was no longer to serve under General Byng, and I felt great regret that we were to part. I feel some hesitation in mentioning here what he wrote to me, but have decided that I ought to do so. This was his last letter:—

17/XI./18.

MY DEAR HALDANE,

One of the hardest tasks I have ever undertaken is to try to thank an old friend (like yourself) for his great loyalty, support, and help.

I always knew that you would give them to me, and I knew that equally well you would never spare yourself to give me that assistance which has brought about this wonderful triumph.

To the end of my days I shall think, and I think rightly, that the Army I commanded was incomparable. This had been brought about by yourself and the other Corps Commanders who have made my task easy.

I thank you, my old friend, from the bottom of my heart.

Yours ever,

(Sgd.) JULIAN BYNG,  
Commdg. Third Army.



The confidential report which he sent to the War Office on me was as follows :—

General Haldane's record is a fine one. From August 1914 to November 1918 he has given up his mind and body to the task in hand. He has served in the Third Army for a year and a half, and that period has enabled me to form the very highest opinion of him as an educated soldier and leader of men. Both in attack and defence his Corps has been universally successful. His staff work has been admirable, even under the most difficult situations. His knowledge of training and tactics has produced the most flattering results in action. His discipline and care of officers and men are most marked, and his loyalty and help to the Army I shall always remember with pride. I recommend him for any appointment open to his rank.

(Sgd.) JULIAN BYNG,  
Commdg. Third Army.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### WITH THE ARMY OF THE RHINE.

A CHANGE in the composition of the Sixth Corps left me with only the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, though when we reached Cologne the Guards Division again joined the corps. Before we arrived at the Rhine, Belgium and part of Germany had to be traversed, and although it was winter the country looked beautiful and reminded me of Scotland.

At Charleroi I was billeted for a few days with a Monsieur Dewandre, whose house in the Rue Puissant occupied the site of one which had been Napoleon's headquarters at the outset of the Waterloo campaign. One evening my host, who lived next door to me, invited me to taste his Burgundy and bring with me two of my staff. He explained that the best vintages of that wine had from early days found their way to Belgium, just as the finest *crus* of claret were imported to Leith and Belfast, and he produced from his cellar—which somehow had escaped the thirsty Germans—Volnay, Richebourg, Clos Vougeot, and Chambertin. As in the case of the marriage of Cana, I am inclined to think that the best wine was kept to the last, but all were exceptionally good. A few days later, when at Vielsalm, where the Crown Prince in flying to Holland had stayed for four days, one of the leading citizens treated me in the same fashion, and I found it rather trying to have to imbibe Burgundy at four o'clock in the afternoon.

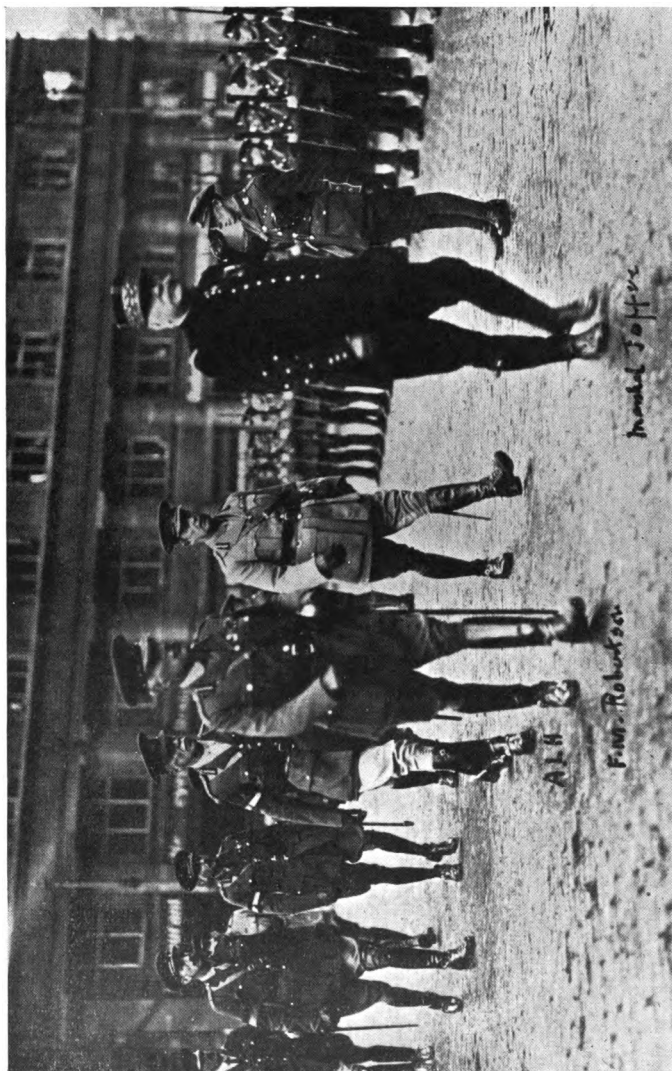
On the 11th December we reached the German frontier and I rode to one of the posts there to watch my troops passing into the Reich. The day was wet, but I managed to have some photographs taken of the scene, and from these an oil-painting was made by Mr Cecil Lawson, which I presented to the 1st Gordon Highlanders, it being still in the corps.

I was told about this time that in the fight after we had crossed the Canal du Nord some of the men declared that they

had had "a grand day's work; plenty of Germans to kill and no one to stop us." I knew that, dating from the retreat from Mons four years earlier, the Highlanders had some score to settle, for some of them had been murdered in cold blood, and it seemed that in the ranks of the battalion there were still a few men who had not forgotten what had happened.

It was near the Canal du Nord that, on taking exercise, I came upon a crowd of the enemy who were making their way to a wired enclosure where prisoners were temporarily located. From a point some distance away—for I always avoided going near German prisoners—I watched the party arrive, at the head of which was a young, evidently Prussian, officer, who wore yellow kid gloves. On entering the enclosure one of the guard directed him to a corner where were a number of officers who had already arrived, for we took many prisoners that day. On arriving there he presented himself to the senior officer, saluted and clicked his heels, and for a few minutes they engaged in conversation. When this was concluded the senior officer, apparently satisfied with the explanation as to why he had become a prisoner, proceeded to introduce the young officer in turn to all present, a procedure which involved much heel-clicking and saluting. It crossed my mind how different would have been the behaviour of those at whom I was looking had they belonged to our own army.

We arrived at Schleiden the day after crossing the frontier and I was billeted for some days in the house of the *Landrath*, Graf Joseph von Spee, whose relative had been in command of the German squadron which Admiral Sturdee destroyed near the Falkland Islands. Here for the first time I had a guard on my quarters furnished by my own regiment. Throughout the war I had abstained from this luxury, which merely had the effect of withdrawing a few men from the fighting ranks of a unit and which was more for show than utility. The *Landrath* intimated that he wished to make my acquaintance, but as there was nothing to be gained by so doing I let him know that I did not wish to make his. I must admit that I found it rather a strain from now onwards while in Germany to resist my natural inclination to bury the hatchet, but we were still in a state of war and I reminded myself of the brutal way in which the Germans had at times behaved, and this recollection helped me to resist the temptation to



Marshal Joffre visits Cologne, 24th September 1919.

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be friendly. I continued to be distantly polite when unavoidably I happened to meet any of that nation.

A curious thing which struck me on entering Germany, more particularly in any large town, such as Cologne, was that there seemed to be a kind of conspiracy to hide any signs of war, for I have no recollection during all the time I was in that country of seeing a single civilian (ex-soldier) who showed any trace of having been wounded or having lost a limb; and it seemed as if all such had been removed before our arrival. At Charleroi, too, I had noticed that houses that had been damaged by bombs had been boarded up and otherwise camouflaged, and it seemed as if we were meant to see nothing that would remind us that we had shortly before been at war.

From Schleiden I moved to Düren, a big manufacturing town some twenty or thirty miles west of Cologne, where there were statues of Bismarck and Moltke. On the night of the 26th-27th December someone destroyed, in a conspicuous part of the town, a monument commemorative of the war of 1870-71. The burgomaster, a veteran of that war, was very angry at this piece of vandalism, and no doubt wished to make capital out of it. If such was the case my feelings coincided with his, and I forbade any reference in the local newspapers to what had occurred. At the same time he was informed that as I highly disapproved of the incident I would take care to punish the offenders when caught and that the *denkmal* would be restored. As a punishment I arranged that a picket under an officer should patrol the streets of the town until such time as the offenders chose to give up their names. This soon happened, the picket was dispensed with, and the monument was renovated at the expense of my corps by the original sculptor, who was discovered to be alive at Aachen.

On the 1st January 1919 I was promoted lieutenant-general, and among letters of congratulation was one from Sir Reginald Brade, Secretary of the War Office. In it he said, "You have indeed worthily overcome the disabilities of your name," a remark which strengthened the belief that I had suffered from a hidden hand at headquarters. Presumably he referred to the abuse which my cousin, Lord Haldane, had had to endure at the hands of the Press and from other quarters, but that had nothing to do with me, though it may have been the

cause that my name had not been included among the honours distributed to others from time to time.

Demobilisation was now in progress, and much ill-feeling, which in some cases led to mutiny, was general. It arose from the fact that Mr Lloyd George, interfering with War Office plans, had allowed men, whose turn had not arrived to go back to civil life, to remain at home when they had gone on leave. These men were securing employment, while others at the front with greater claims were losing their chance of doing so.

My own corps was singularly free from such trouble, and when Sir William Robertson, who had succeeded General Plumer in the Rhine command, mentioned to me that he was astonished at an instance—the only one—that had occurred among those under my command and asked me what I was doing about it, I replied that I had no intention of making the instigators feel important by personally intervening in the matter. I had ordered certain men to be tried by court-martial and warned all ranks that such conduct could only have the effect of retarding the date of their return home. No further occurrences of a like nature threw a blemish on the Sixth Corps.

Sir William must have felt some anxiety at this time. The bulk of the troops at Cologne belonged to my corps, and it would fall to me to make the arrangements for the King's Birthday Parade. When he asked me whether I thought the men would respond to the customary command to give three cheers for His Majesty, I replied that I was confident that they would do so. Though there were a few disaffected men in the ranks, the bulk were loyal and recognised that King George, who was a popular monarch, was in no way responsible for what was really a just cause of complaint.

By the 10th February 1919 the reduction of the Army of the Rhine had arrived at the point where it was to consist of only ten divisions, so that I was now left with the Guards and the 3rd Division. My headquarters were at the house of Herr Adolf Oehme, No. 56 Fürst Pückler Strasse, which faced the Lindenthal, an extensive public park on the west side of Cologne. We avoided meeting the family, for, then and for a considerable time, I would not shake hands with a German. One day when Frau Oehme was making trouble about something one of my aides-de-camp, the present Lord Saltoun, produced a copy of an order by a German general, according

to which all inhabitants where the fighting was going on were to be relegated to the cellars and German officers were to occupy rooms above ground. This was a revelation to her ; and when he further pointed out that when he passed through Cologne as a prisoner at the beginning of the war German ladies (save the word) had deliberately poured on to the platform of the station water they were carrying rather than give it to thirsty prisoners, even she was affected and burst into tears. He never again had trouble about our quarters.

One advantage of being at Cologne was that the opera was accessible, whereas at Düren, where I was for a time, it was at a distance. During the season I shared a box with four others and was present at fifty performances, the cost of which, the mark then standing at sixteen marks to the shilling, amounted to only £5. One day the Master of Saltoun was getting tickets when the director spoke to him about the applause which the Englishman is so prone to give for music not always of the best. He explained that in Germany audiences only applauded when operas were of the light order, such as Italian and other productions, and these he termed *bravoura*, whereas in the case of German operas—Wagner's, for instance—these works were too *tiefsinnig* to be applauded until the end of the act. I entirely agreed with what the director said. The military audience was sinning through ignorance of the German custom, and it was arranged that a notice should appear in an English newspaper which was published at Cologne for the benefit of the troops, and this had the desired effect.

The peace conference was at this time sitting at Paris, and the delay in coming to a settlement was reflected by a certain amount of restiveness in that part of Germany which we were occupying. At Berlin there were breaches of the peace caused by so-called Bolsheviks, and these were utilised later to prevent the enforcement of the peace terms accepted at Versailles. I never placed the slightest belief in the idea that Germany would "go Bolshevik," for I felt that the country was far too subservient to authority and robot-like to break out into open revolt. Unfortunately, there was a fairly widespread belief among our people that the danger was real, and of this Hitler was to take advantage later on as an excuse for re-arming ; for, like the sword of Damocles, the threat of



Bolshevism was kept suspended over the heads of the nations of Europe, some of which wanted peace at almost any price.

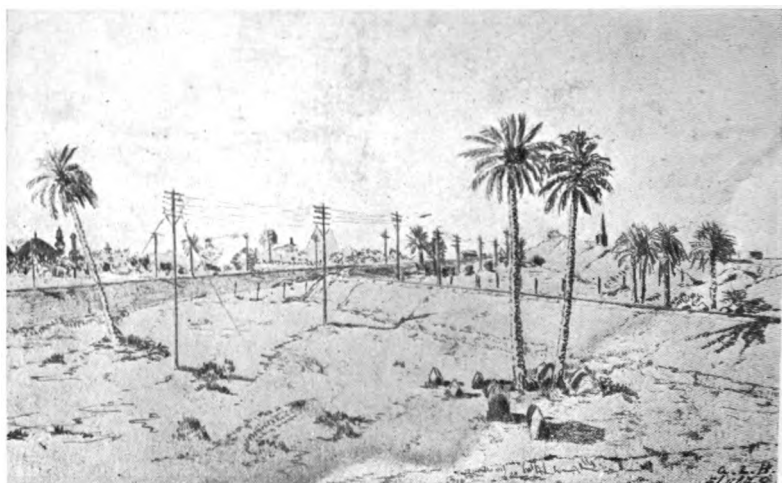
Before we crossed the frontier into Germany I had warned my troops to be careful in their relations with the inhabitants, and while at Düren I learned through the censoring of letters that there had been some reason to put them on their guard. This led to my requesting General Plumer that an order might be issued forbidding marriages between British and Germans. This was done before peace was signed ; but no sooner had that taken place than, on inquiring, I was informed that there was no longer anything to prevent such alliances. It seems to me that if ever again we have an army of occupation in Germany or elsewhere we shall have to take into account the possibility of such mixed marriages, for the power of forgiving and forgetting is phenomenal where the Englishman is concerned, though less so north of the Tweed.

Cologne itself was by no means free of strikes and threats of trouble from Spartacists and others, and when in May 1919 the discipline of the garrison was at my request handed over to me, I got it arranged that strikes should be forbidden on the plea that they might lead to breaches of the peace, for which I was responsible. On one occasion when there seemed to be a prospect of an outbreak I put in action the defence scheme—that is to say, machine-guns at street corners and so on—and sent through the city a stream of tanks. Thereafter peace reigned while I was at Cologne.

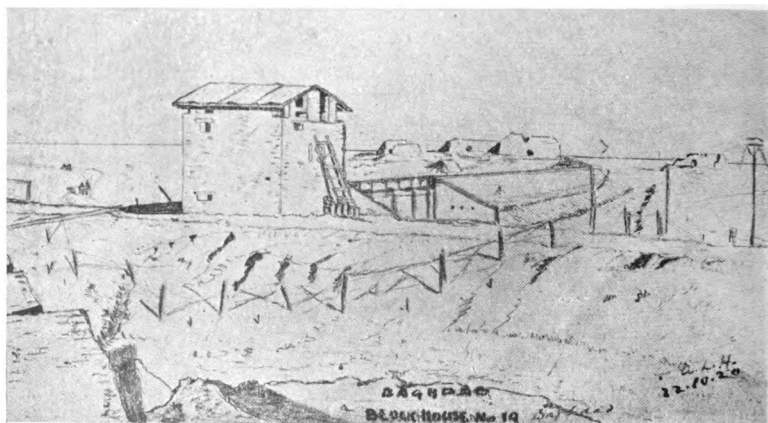
When the terms of peace became known there was one among them which I was persuaded meant the laying-up of trouble in the future. I refer to the fantastic idea of the Polish Corridor, and in my diary of the 12th May I noted : " This is a mistake, and I think will mean trouble in the future. It has not been brought home to the Germans how guilty they were in starting the war, and the masses do not see the reason for the severity of the peace terms."

Writing in 1945 I notice that in Germany much the same feeling prevails as in 1919, and every means by propaganda should be taken to counteract such a fallacy, the effects of which are easy to foretell. In this connection I may mention a conversation which I had with Sir Douglas Haig on the 28th March 1919, when he was staying for a few days with General Plumer. He said that we had been too hard on





Country near Baghdad East Railway Station.



A blockhouse in the ring encircling Baghdad.

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Germany and that if he were a German he would not feel repentant for what he had done ; and he pitied them because they had been misled by their Government, which had taught them in the schools to sing "Deutschland über alles." My own feelings at this time, which I duly noted, were : " I do not see why they should be pitied, and it would not be Christ-like to forgive the unrepentant." This I wrote in my diary on the night of the 28th March twenty-six years ago, and nothing in the interim has made me waver in my opinion formed at that time.

Another visitor, who arrived some time earlier, was Mr Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for War, who came with the Army Council, which included Henry Wilson. At the conclusion of the parade, which was under my command, of the whole garrison, he had lunch with me, and remarked that it was a fine thing to have gone through the war from the beginning to the end in command of troops, as so many had not succeeded in doing. He added that he had in view for me a command in India where he wished to get rid of certain "fossils" and improve the army there. I did not say that the last thing I wished was to go to the East, for I knew that if I were required to do so I would not refuse.

Yet another visitor, who came after Marshals Joffre and Foch, was the Emir Faisul, to whom I was presented one night at the opera and whom I was to know better before many months had passed. We conversed in French, as I did not know Arabic, and I had the utmost difficulty in understanding what he wished to convey, for his knowledge of that language was rudimentary and his pronunciation execrable.

I much enjoyed my time at Cologne, which was restful after the strain of four years' fighting on the western front ; but I did not realise till I returned to London that my nerves were somewhat on edge, for I found the din of the traffic trying.

I had several visitors, who came one after another, once we were settled in Fürst Pückler Strasse. Evelyn Cecil was followed by Lord Newton, who went on to Berlin on some matter connected with prisoners of war ; and my old friend, Willie Peel, stayed for quite a time, and when he left took back with him a supply of Rhine wines which were still procurable at reasonable prices, but getting scarcer after the

British officers had learned their good qualities. In order to provide distraction for officers and men I arranged for friends and others to come from England to deliver lectures in several places where they were billeted, and amongst those who were good enough to oblige were Professor Sir Charles Oman, who discoursed on the British Army of earlier days, Lord Denbigh and Arthur Pollen, whose excellent articles on the progress of the war in 'Land and Water' may still be remembered by some.

As the commander of a corps one had the advantage of being allowed to visit the neutral ground at a certain distance beyond the Rhine, where fishing for trout and grayling was to be obtained in some of its tributaries. My aide-de-camp, the Master of Saltoun, who had become fluent in German while a prisoner, usually accompanied me, and many a day did we spend in the beautiful country which, unlike France, showed no signs of the depredations of war.

But all good things come to an end, and the time arrived for me to hand over my corps to General Morland, who was senior to me and was to remain with the army of occupation, and return to London, where for the first time in my service I was placed on half-pay.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### MY SEVENTH CAMPAIGN—MESOPOTAMIA.

I HAD not been home many weeks when one day I was offered the command in Mesopotamia, which at that time was not a popular spot. Indeed one officer who was senior to me said, "Thank goodness you are going there and not I," and a few days later Henry Wilson, then Chief of the Imperial General Staff, when I ran across him at a city dinner, remarked that on my arrival at Baghdad I would probably find myself in a hornets' nest. But beggars can't be choosers, and there were no prospects of employment at home. As I knew nothing about Mesopotamia, except that it seemed to be the grave of general officers, I forthwith began collecting every book on the subject that might enlighten my ignorance. I also saw Sir John Hewitt and others who knew something about it, but the information I received, though interesting, was not exactly exhilarating. Sir John urged me to get rid as soon as possible of Sir Arnold Wilson, the civil commissioner at Baghdad, who was bound to be a source of trouble to me, and he had not much to say in favour of Miss Gertrude Bell, who was employed under that official. I was to find that he was not mistaken regarding what he said on the subject of Wilson, but I had no difficulty in hitting it off with his lady assistant, who was a good friend to me, brimful of knowledge of all kinds, and, what interested me much, was an adventurous mountaineer. She lived near me at Baghdad and frequently dined with me; and when I had King Faisul or other Arabs as my guests at meals she was so good as to come and act as interpreter.

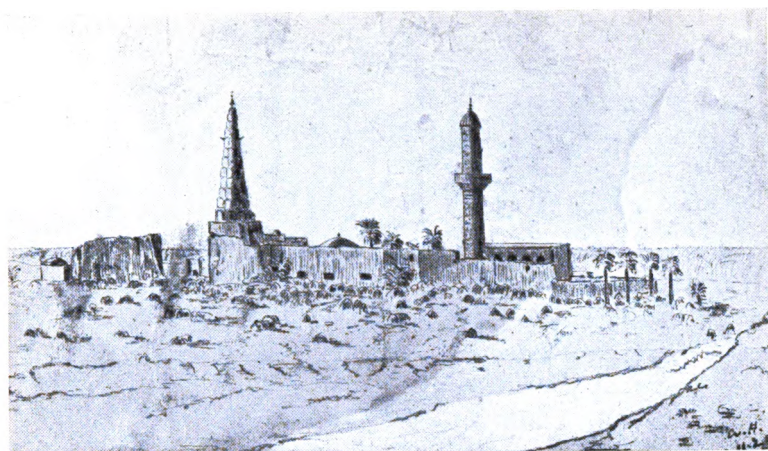
A few days before my departure to the East, which had been fixed to be on or about the 15th February, I was bidden to report myself at the War Office, where Mr Churchill harangued me for twenty minutes on the necessity for making drastic reductions in the garrison of Mesopotamia, the cost of which,

he said, was becoming intolerable to the British taxpayers. I will not say more on that subject at this point, but as in carrying out these reductions he realised that some risk would be involved, he pointed out that I must not hesitate to represent the actual state of affairs when communicating with the War Office. He wound up as I was leaving by saying that he had chosen me for the command I was about to take up because I was something more than a soldier; and his last words were that I should write to him regularly and keep him informed of the situation, apart from the official cables which I would send from time to time.

Three days after this interview I went to Paris and thence to my friend, Miss Amy Paget, near Cannes, where it was arranged that I should stay till I joined the P. and O. steamer *Devanha* at Marseilles, on board which would be my aide-de-camp, Captain Grehan, who had served with me in the Sixth Corps and who would bring with him my heavy baggage.

Before leaving Cannes I had lunch one day with Adele, Lady Essex, to meet the Duke of Connaught, who gave me a message for the 1st Rifle Brigade, which he had at one time commanded and which now formed part of the garrison of Mesopotamia.

The voyage to the East resembled earlier ones I had made, so there is nothing to be said about it. On board the *Devanha* was H.H. the Agha Khan, whom I had met in London, and I had several talks with him about the country to which I was bound. I found later that there was much sound sense in what he said, for by this time I had learned that our policy, which was directed mostly by officials from India, had as its main object the prevention of tribal feuds, while on the contrary the Turks, whom we had succeeded in the government of the country, had purposely fostered ill-feeling between tribe and tribe. The system they had followed was the Machiavellian one of *divide et impera*, by which the power of the tribesmen was weakened. Combinations against the Government were not feared, for, had it been otherwise, considerable forces would have been required to keep them in check. It seemed to me that if the number of the troops was to be reduced without loss of time there was more to be said in favour of the Turkish system than the one which we were following. Moreover, the Arabs and Turks were more or less



Tomb of Zubaide, authoress of ' The Thousand and One Nights.'



Looking down the Tigris from near Baghdad.

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co-religionists, which was no little advantage when it came to the point of composing quarrels.

On reaching Bombay, as my steamer to Basra would not sail for some time, I was bidden to spend a few days with my old friend the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Charles Monro, at his cold-weather headquarters at Delhi. We had known each other at Belfast in 1887, and his wife and her family were friends of several years' standing. One day I had an interview with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, who did not approve of Churchill's idea of holding Mesopotamia mainly by means of the Royal Air Force. His opinion was, I think, based on experience gained on the North-West Frontier, where conditions were very different from those in Mesopotamia, where the country is, generally speaking, a great plain.

On the 12th I returned to Bombay, where I stayed at the Taj Mahal Hotel, which I think, considering the accommodation, was the most expensive hostelry I have ever entered. For my room alone I paid the equivalent of £1, 17s. 6d. daily, and as the food was indifferent my aide-de-camp and I took our meals at the Yacht Club. Two days later we sailed for Basra on the *Chakdina*, a vessel of 1580 tons, which carried some reinforcements and officers on the way to join their units.

Basra—the Bassora of Sinbad the Sailor—was a busy, bustling place at the date of my arrival; for, although the garrison of Mesopotamia had been somewhat reduced on the conclusion of active operations, the town on the banks of the Shatt-el-Arab continued for some time to display traces of its earlier activities, more especially along the riverside.

As I drove about the place on the afternoon I landed and the next day, I realised that the task of reducing to reasonable dimensions a base that covered some twenty square miles of ground would not be an easy one. But my instructions were to dispense, without loss of time, with every man that could be spared. Whether they liked it or not, human limpets would have to be removed with a ruthless hand from the posts in which they seemed to think they were firmly fixed. My senior administrative staff officer had come from Baghdad to meet me, and I proceeded to pick his brains for the next thirty-six hours.

Having issued orders regarding reductions and other matters, the journey was resumed on a comfortable stern-

wheeler, the last lap being by rail from Kut to the city of Haroun-al-Raschid. There I was met by the Acting Civil Commissioner, Colonel Sir A. T. Wilson, and several of my staff, and drove from the apology for a station to the house which was to be my dwelling for the next two years. Here the German general, Von der Goltz, and General Maude had lived and died, and after them the house had been occupied by the successors of the latter.

For three days I remained at Baghdad studying papers and interviewing officers and others, after which I set off on the first of the extensive tours of inspection by means of which I could obtain first-hand knowledge not only of the country but of the officers who were in command at the various posts which were scattered about it. What struck me most as I made my way by air, train, or motor-car were the great distances which had to be traversed when moving from one part of the country to another. The length of the communications by road, rail, and river exceeded 2600 miles, and in the event of tribal risings it was obvious that it would be impossible to guard them, so that many garrisons might for a time become isolated. Orders were issued regarding defensive measures and, so far as supplies of stores would allow, steps were taken to ensure that no post, as had happened earlier in the case of Kut, should be starved into surrender.

At this time, except for certain operations on the Upper Euphrates, Mesopotamia was to outward appearance quiet, though the seeds of trouble had been planted before my arrival and had been growing for several months. I abstain from entering into details concerning the causes which led to the outbreak of the tribes some two months later, and before I could become fully acquainted with the many problems which Mesopotamia presented. These causes, put briefly, embraced the reduction of the garrison, which could not be hidden from the watchful Arabs; skilful Turkish and Sharifian propaganda; dislike of the precise system, imported from India, of dealing with cultivators so different from the casual method of our predecessors, the Turks; and the restiveness aroused by revenue collection, besides numerous other matters, trivial no doubt when taken separately, but in combination sufficient to tip the balance in favour of breaches of the peace.

I will not disguise the fact that soon after my arrival at

Baghdad the Acting Civil Commissioner made no secret of the fact of his belief that trouble might before many weeks arise in the Lower Euphrates area, but after a visit there he wrote on the 3rd June that the local authorities had guaranteed that they would keep the peace.

My own intelligence staff did not regard the situation pessimistically, and I decided that, in face of conflicting opinions, and as requests for reinforcements at a time when I was being urged from home to reduce the garrison would not be regarded sympathetically, an optimistic attitude, whatever my personal feelings might be, was the proper one. I was to some extent influenced in this attitude by a letter which I received from Miss Gertrude Bell, who knew the Arabs more intimately than any other member of the civil staff. In this she said a day or two after Wilson's letter of the 3rd June arrived, "The bottom seems to have dropped out of the agitation, and most of the leaders seem only too anxious to let bygones be bygones. I have heart-to-heart interviews." Until the fat was actually in the fire the London temple of Janus was not likely to open its gates.

Having completed inspections I started to the most distant part of my command, which took me to Teheran after a three-days' journey by car. I had been warned before leaving London that active operations were more likely to take place in the direction of the Caspian than elsewhere, and a force of Bolsheviks had recently landed at Enzeli, on the southern shore of that sea. It was fortunate that I decided to go to Persia, whither, by orders of the War Office, I had earlier despatched two British battalions, for on arrival at Teheran I cancelled the movements there of further reinforcements, consisting of field artillery which, as events were to show, I could ill have spared. The distance by road was considerable and required several weeks to cover, so that the guns would have been lost at a time when their presence in Mesopotamia was badly needed. From Kasvin, which was the headquarters of the commander of my troops in the kingdom of the Shah, I drove one day as near Enzeli as was possible, but when I met the Bolshevik advanced-guard I was obliged hastily to retrace my steps. This took me back to the Manjil Pass, which was guarded by two Indian battalions, one of which was a Gurkha unit, the colonel of which was in command on the spot. This

place struck me as an ideal rear-guard position, well suited for fighting a delaying action, and I explained exactly how the defence should be carried out, suggesting that, instead of retiring, the defenders should advance to meet the Bolshevik troops, who I suspected were of little military value. But the commanding officer, whose Indian officers were not like those of other Gurkha regiments which I had known in earlier days on the North-West Frontier and were much too fleshy to look like hill-climbers, did not respond to my views any more than did the brigade commander at Kasvin. Indeed a little later when the Bolshevik force began its advance the holders of the pass at once fell back, the plea being that another hostile detachment was threatening their communications with Kasvin, which proved not to be the case. This led to changes in the command, whereby General Ironside, for whom I had applied, came from Constantinople, and I had no more anxiety in that part of my command.

After completing my business in Persia I returned to Baghdad and found that the Acting Civil Commissioner had grown anxious regarding affairs on the Middle Euphrates, but so far as I could judge the situation had not worsened. A few days later, taking with me some of my staff, I proceeded to Sar-i-Mil, near Karind, in Persia, where a large number of the families of non-commissioned officers and men were in an extensive camp. Their arrival had been arranged before I arrived in the country, and as the climate of Mesopotamia—frequently 120 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade—was unsuitable, Karind had been selected for their quarters during the summer.

My stay at Sar-i-Mil was brief, for on the 30th June an incident, trivial in itself, lighted the fire of insurrection on the Middle Euphrates and I hastened back to Baghdad. The trouble arose through the injudicious action of a district political officer who had caused a local sheikh to be arrested for debt at Rumaithah. Some time earlier I had urged the Acting Civil Commissioner to dispense with the services of this officer who, by his tactlessness and overbearing manner in dealing with the Arabs, had proved his unsuitability for the post he held, but no substitute being immediately available he had unwisely deferred doing so.

It would take too much space in this narrative to describe what followed, for the sheikh was rescued by his tribesmen,

troops had to be sent to quell the revolt, and they again extricated with difficulty and at considerable risk. As other tribes now joined in the rising it became necessary to concentrate the relieving troops at Hillah, which was threatened and was important as the base of operations in the area of disturbance ; and with the Arabs tearing up the railway line the situation grew worse daily.

As the troops that could be spared from essential garrisons, to move which would have caused an even greater extension of the rising, were inadequate to suppress the many thousand Arabs who opposed us, the only course was to await reinforcements, which came all too slowly from India. No sooner had the revolt been crushed in one quarter than it would burst forth more intensely in another ; but at length, when troops from overseas arrived, numerous columns could be despatched in many directions and peace was gradually restored. Before outside help came we lived on a veritable powder-mine, and communication by rail could only be maintained, and then precariously, by blockhousing several hundred miles of the permanent way. Round the wide perimeters of Baghdad and Basra blockhouses were also constructed, and as troops were not available to hold them they were placed in charge of Indian labour coolies who, by the expenditure of vast quantities of ammunition, maintained their morale and discouraged attempts to rush their posts.

The supply of the posts along the railway was difficult, for the line was single and there were few passing places ; but, worst of all, most of the rolling-stock was at Basra, where were also the principal workshops, and the movement of troops and supplies was a constant difficulty.

By utilising the labour units I had succeeded in reducing the garrison of Baghdad to only one battalion—the 1st Rifle Brigade—on which and its excellent commanding officer, Alan Paley, I placed great reliance. This unit was kept in a central position ready to move at a moment's warning to any threatened point on the perimeter. A similar system was introduced at Basra, which allowed of every possible unit being reserved for operations in the field.

What helped to add to the difficulties of the situation arose from the fact that Mesopotamia proved to be a country of surprises, and even those who had inhabited it for some time

could not be relied upon to furnish accurate information regarding its idiosyncrasies. During the troubles I suffered many times from alarms which had the effect of undermining my confidence in what was told me by both civil and military informants who might, had they been more observant, have been more trustworthy. I could give numerous instances of the kind of thing to which I refer, but I will mention only two.

On the night of the 8th August, when affairs were not going at all smoothly, a telegram of a highly disturbing nature was brought to me. The sender was the irrigation officer at Hillah, who stated that the branch of the Euphrates there was full to the brim and that a disaster was imminent. The exact significance of what he stated was not clear, but it conveyed the impression both to me and my senior staff officer, who was well acquainted with the country, that the Arabs had deliberately diverted the whole volume of that great river down that branch, the effect of which must be not only to flood the town of Hillah but the area through which my sole disposable fighting force was laboriously withdrawing after relieving Rumaithah. Should what the telegram foreshadowed occur, the least that could happen would be that an important part of my command might find itself marooned and unable to reach Hillah, where its presence was urgently needed.

At this point I must mention that I was in the habit of reading last thing at night the Psalm for the evening of the day, and a few minutes after the arrival of the telegram I read the words: "The Lord sitteth above the water flood and the Lord remaineth King for ever." These words gave me great comfort at an anxious moment and I went to sleep in the firm assurance that the catastrophe which seemed to be inevitable would somehow be averted. That proved to be the case, for next morning it became known that the telegram had been despatched by an official who was new to his job and was of an unnecessarily alarming nature. I soon learned that the Hillah branch was frequently full, almost to overflowing, but that on either side of it were two miles of country which would absorb the flood-water.

The other matter related to the river gunboats, several of which I had at my disposal for patrolling the rivers and generally for police duties. The rise and fall of the Euphrates

at different seasons were considerable, and unless care was taken a gunboat might easily be cut off at some point, where it would be rendered useless for some months. Once, when help was urgently required for a beleaguered garrison, opinions differed as to the possibility of furnishing it by water, and when the chance was taken the vessel could not be got to the required spot and fell into the hands of the Arabs.

The situation for several weeks recalled to my mind the tale of the faithful sister Anne, who kept looking for the arrival of her brothers to save her sister from the clutches of the bloodthirsty Bluebeard ; and I counted the days when help would arrive from India.

I had earlier felt obliged to inform the Secretary of State for War of the plight into which we were gradually drifting, and though at first it was not appreciated, a cable explaining the situation in detail drew from him a reply that he understood and would do all in his power to meet my requirements.

The position of affairs continued to be extremely grave until reinforcements began, battalion after battalion, to arrive from India. Apart from the steps in various directions that had to be undertaken to prevent the rising from spreading, I was burdened with encumbrances in the shape of a large number of married families cut off in Persia, where they ran the risk of being massacred ; I had several thousand Turkish prisoners, the aftermath of the Great War, who required a whole brigade of infantry to guard them ; while east of Baghdad were still greater numbers of Assyrian refugees whom it was proposed, when opportunity offered, to settle somewhere north of Mosul. Gradually these encumbrances were removed, but so long as they remained on my hands they were a source of anxiety.

Not until the 6th February 1921, seven months after the beginning of the troubles, was I able to inform the War Office that the operations had come to an end. In my despatch of that date I stated that 63,045 rifles (all serviceable), over 3,000,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition, and a sum of rupees, the equivalent of £54,112 sterling, had been paid in as fines by the recalcitrant tribes, the number of rifles exceeding by several thousands what the political officers had estimated they possessed prior to the insurrection.

When I carry back my thoughts to the last days of the



Tirah Expedition and the difficulty we had in extracting only 800 rifles from the Afridis, I cannot help thinking that the revolt in Mesopotamia was brought to a conclusion in a far more satisfactory and thorough manner than was the case in my earlier experience. A difficult situation had been successfully dealt with and, opposed by greatly superior forces, a vast area, which from one end to the other was in a state of turmoil, had been pacified and the inhabitants made to submit.

There was a time when the Civil Commissioner seemed to have lost his nerve, for he pressed me to withdraw altogether from the Mosul area, which lies well north of Baghdad. He feared that there might not be sufficient forces to deal with the troubles farther south, and I was having great difficulty in forwarding supply trains in the opposite direction. But I set my face against yielding an acre of the country, and with the help of the commander at Mosul I was able to carry out that determination.

I may mention that prior to the rising there was a large area between the Tigris and Euphrates into which our troops had not ventured to penetrate, and any suggestion to do so was met with strong opposition. I, however, planned to enter it from two directions, and though the operation was not an easy one it was successfully carried out and the tribesmen learned that whenever we chose we could enter into their fastnesses.



Jaafar Pasha, King Faisal, and General Haldane.  
(Jaafar Pasha was assassinated a few years later.)



King Faisal of Iraq and General Haldane with ice-box at  
Miss Gertrude Bell's picnic.

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## CHAPTER XLIX.

### AFTER THE INSURRECTION.

UNTIL the time arrived for me to relinquish the command and return to England I was mainly occupied with the question of reducing the garrison of Iraq, as the country was now called. Sir Arnold Wilson had been replaced by Sir Percy Zacariah Cox, whose arrival in the country coincided with the termination of the insurrection. The new commissioner was not a satisfactory man with whom to work. He was almost oyster-like in reticence, and persisted in keeping his opposite number, the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, in the dark in many essential matters. I made suggestions but they did not meet with his approval, and in consequence there were occasional misunderstandings. Cox was a man who preferred to keep everything in his own hands, yet the country had no settled government and had not recovered from the disturbances which preceded his arrival, and it was highly important that there should be close co-operation between the civil and military administrations. I realised that, though at Muscat in the Persian Gulf he had been accustomed to act in this fashion, such a system would not work now that he had entered upon a more extended area of administration. His prestige, of which at one time one heard a good deal, was based on the military force behind it and was indeed somewhat illusory. Only once during the months he was at Baghdad during my command did he quit the city and get into personal touch with the tribesmen, and I was surprised when Miss Gertrude Bell told me that it had never been his way to do so. On the other hand, I made a practice of touring the country with a small escort of half a dozen Sikhs and an officer interpreter, through whom I addressed the assembled sheikhs on the subject of the recent disturbances and the absurdity of soldiers, as we all were, being at issue. On my return from these expeditions I did not fail to inform the High Commissioner

as to what I had said to the tribesmen, so that there might be no possibility of our working at cross purposes.

It was clear that his interests and those of the country led him to spare the Iraq budget every penny he could foist on the British exchequer, but that view was not in conformity with the instructions which Churchill had given me before I left London. Cox had told the Colonial Secretary (for Churchill had been transferred to the Colonial Office in January 1921) before starting for Iraq that no reduction of the garrison of the country would be possible until three years had elapsed. In this matter I did not accept his view, and it was rather a military than a civil one, but he obstinately held to his opinion no matter what I said, an opinion which was to prove to be incorrect.

Not long after Churchill's change of office he suggested coming to Baghdad to discuss reductions on the spot, but a little later he decided to hold at Cairo a conference at which questions affecting Palestine, Iraq, and some other British possessions or mandated territories could be debated. This conference I was ordered to attend and was directed to bring with me General Ironside, who, as I have already said, was commanding in Persia. In consequence, towards the end of February I sailed for Suez, having with me, besides Ironside, two officers of my staff. On board the *Hardinge*, which was to take us to Egypt, were also Sir Percy Cox, his wife, Miss Bell, and one or two others of the political staff.

A couple of hours after reaching Cairo I had an interview with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, at which he sketched his intentions regarding the future rule of Iraq, when I learned that I was to be replaced by Ironside, who I understood was a protégé of the Minister. One does not expect much consideration from statesmen or politicians, but after what I had accomplished in Iraq, where a single mistake might have hastened a catastrophe, I could not help feeling rather sore, though I showed no sign of my chagrin.

I will not enter into details of what went on at Cairo, where I was interested to meet Lawrence of Arabia, who was a member of one of the several committees that were formed for dealing with the business that had to be dealt with. At first sight he did not impress me, but he was not communicative and had about him a little of the pride that apes humility. A compre-

hensive plan for reductions in the Iraq garrison was evolved by a committee over which General Walter Congreve, who held the command in Egypt, presided. Their decisions met with a good deal of opposition from a quarter which I need not indicate. It was eventually decided by Churchill that I was not, as he originally intended, to return to England, but remain as General Officer Commanding-in-Chief in Iraq, while Ironside would, under the Civil Commissioner, be responsible for raising the levies which would replace the regular troops as their numbers were reduced. As I realised that no sooner were our backs turned on Cairo every obstacle would be placed in the way of the promised reductions, I warned Churchill that a firm hand at home would be necessary if any headway was to be counted on.

The work at Cairo, so far as concerned Iraq, having been completed, we sailed from Suez on the 25th March. On the day we landed at Basra, where I had work in connection with the proposed reductions, General Ironside, who was in a hurry to get to Baghdad to start his work of raising levies, had the misfortune to crash in a plane which was taking him there and which ran into a dust-storm, and in consequence he left for England some weeks later and never returned to Iraq.

The remainder of my time in that country was occupied with stripping it of such troops as could be dispensed with—a procedure which would not have been possible but for the thorough suppression of the insurrection, which had taught the tribesmen what it meant to cross swords with the British Empire. I also did everything I could to hasten the raising and training of levies, even to the extent of depriving my own troops of instructors whom I could ill spare. This work was carried on in so leisurely a fashion under the High Commissioner that I almost despaired of being able to fulfil what I had undertaken to do when at Cairo. All the time Cox and I were working at cross-purposes, his eyes never leaving the Iraq budget, while mine were glued on the home exchequer. I could not, however, stand by with equanimity and submit to Peter being robbed to pay Paul. I was alive to the fact that as a soldier, however much I might be in the right, I must inevitably go to the wall when pitted against a civil servant who was certain to receive the support of the politicians no

matter what he did ; but I was not prepared to sacrifice my self-respect and against my conscience do some things he wished. I might amplify my remarks on this subject by quoting examples of what I can only term double-dealing, but the less said about it the better, since he is no longer here to defend himself.

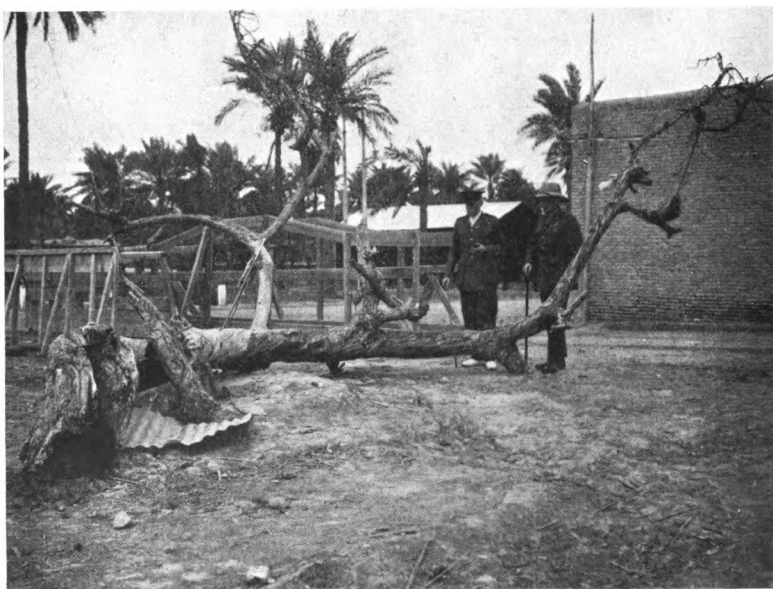
The question of the election of a ruler of Iraq had been proceeding for some months, and towards the end of July the Emir Faisul, who had been chosen, arrived in the country, and preparations were made for the ceremony of his enthronement. This took place on the 23rd August within the citadel at Baghdad, and many Europeans and Baghdadis attended it.

In order to get a good view of the proceedings some of the latter occupied a gallery which overlooked the courtyard in which a dais had been placed. As they pressed forward to get a better view one unfortunate individual lost his balance, fell some twenty feet, and had to be carried away on a stretcher. Another contretemps of a more amusing nature followed, due to the makeshift nature of the dais, for while Sir Percy Cox, who like myself stood beside the Emir, was reading the terms in virtue of which the descendant of the Prophet would become King of Iraq, a strong breeze arose. It lifted up one of the rugs with which the erection on which we stood was covered and disclosed some of the packing-cases used in its construction. The names of firms, such as Nestlé's, Colman, and others appeared, which caused laughter among the European audience ; but until the ceremony was at an end those round the King could not understand the reason for the hilarity.

I have mentioned that I was given to making tours about the country, and one of them took me to the holy but unfriendly and fanatical city of Nejef. The Mahommedan priesthood at this place are in the habit of fleecing their fellow-religionists of the Shiah sect who come there on pilgrimages or to bury their dead. Here I met Sheikh Abdul Wahid, the chief of the powerful Fatlah tribe, who had been among the insurgents a year earlier and had been caught, tried, and sentenced to be hanged. Much to the annoyance of Sir Arnold Wilson, this chief was one of those who, after some months' imprisonment, I had pardoned—a matter which had entirely slipped my memory. But Major Bovill, who accompanied me on these excursions as interpreter, and who had served for



Ruins of Babylon.



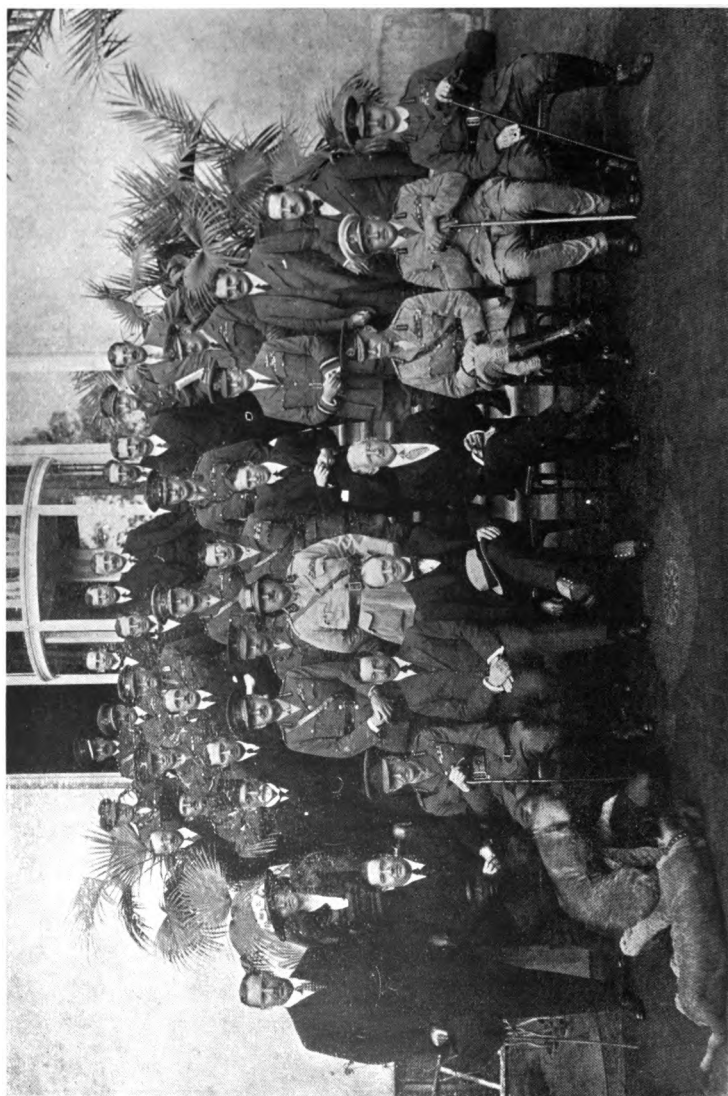
Traditional Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

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The Middle East Conference at Cairo, 21st March 1921.

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some time as a political officer, had stored the fact in his memory. When, therefore, Abdul Wahid presented himself Bovill whispered to me that the man was much in arrears in payment of revenue, and he suggested that the occasion might be turned to account to trap him into paying. I saw no objections to what he proposed, so Bovill told the sheikh that it was due to me that he was still alive ; and he added that he would doubtless like to celebrate the occasion of our meeting by making some return for what I had done. Abdul Wahid readily gave his consent, but when it was suggested that he should settle the debt he demurred until I explained that, though several thousand miles from the United Kingdom, about half my income had to be paid each year in taxes. What I said seemed to impress him in some degree, and Bovill remarked that, as the sheikh was well known as a man of his word, he felt sure that, if he consented to the demand, he would certainly fulfil what he promised.

Before I left Iraq it came to my knowledge that the debt had been paid. I thereupon directed Bovill to purchase, by means of a fund at my disposal, a gold repeater watch and have engraved inside it in Arabic, "A man of his word," and in English characters by whom the gift was made.

Some time elapsed, and when I heard that the sheikh was visiting Baghdad I directed him to be sent for and handed him the watch and chain. He accepted them in the customary unemotional way of Easterns, on which I told Bovill to suggest his going to the window where the light was better, opening the watch and reading what he would find inside. This the sheikh did and his eyes glistened with pride and pleasure as he deciphered the inscription. He then said that he must show what I had given him to King Faisul and he left the room. A little later he reappeared and intimated that he wished, as was the custom, to make me a return gift, and drew from a finger a silver ring set with a large turquoise which he urged me to accept. I thanked him, but shook my head, saying that on such an occasion I preferred not to follow the usual custom of the East and accept a return gift. This seemed to distress him, and he wailed in Arabic, "But you will forget me !" Through Bovill I replied that that need cause him no concern, for to forget him after the trouble he had given earlier would be impossible ; on the contrary, I

should remember him to the end of my days. So the scene ended as he broke into laughter at my words, and before we parted he promised never again to give the British trouble. Indeed, he went further, and undertook that if at any time we were threatened by a disturbance he would come to whoever succeeded me as Commander-in-Chief and give him warning.

By this time I had spent six years of almost continuous service in the field, two of which had been passed in a trying climate, and the doctors urged me to go home. I was induced to concur, for by this time the strength of the command had been greatly reduced and the country was quite peaceable and seemed likely to continue so.

The date fixed for my departure for home approached, when the King, the War Minister, Miss Bell, and some others dined with me. After dinner I gave the King a general's sword with a belt and belt-plate of gold. It was a handsome weapon, with several jewels in its hilt, and had been obtained from Solingen through a friend of mine who was with the Rhine Army. The King was much pleased to possess it and said that my approaching departure made him feel melancholy and like a child who was about to lose his father.

Three days later he gave a large dinner-party in my honour at his residence, which I cannot dignify with the name of palace. He then proposed my health, to which I replied ; and after we adjourned to the drawing-room Jaafar Pasha, the War Minister, took me aside and said that the King wished to make me a present, and though I tried to avoid acceptance I was told that I must submit. His Majesty then presented me with a beautiful sword, or rather scimitar, the blade of which was damascened and the hilt adorned with several valuable diamonds, and Jaafar informed me that the weapon had been in the King's family for over two hundred years.

I left Baghdad on the 28th March, after handing my fox-terrier and black cat, Tom, to a neighbour, and sailed to Basra on my stern-wheeler, which ran aground and stuck in mid-stream for several hours. From Basra I went to Mohammerah, where I had luncheon with the sheikh who, as usual, tried to get something out of me—this time a gunboat. On landing at the quay in front of his palace I saw before me a guard of honour, whose ragged appearance and the handling of whose arms made me

feel inclined to laugh, and as I solemnly walked round the ranks the band broke into our national anthem. From Mohammerah I proceeded to Maidan-i-Naftun, the centre of the Anglo-Iranian oil district, as I had been directed to report how it could best be defended and the number of troops that would be necessary. I stayed there for a night and then returned to Basra, where I found a cable from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff in which I was informed that I might be given the Governorship of Bermuda—an appointment which I did not covet, having been abroad and on active service since 1914.

Bidding farewell to Iraq, which I was leaving without regrets, I sailed to Karachi, the port at which I had landed on my first arrival in India twenty-two years earlier. My thoughts ran back to those days and what a lot had happened to me since then! Then on to Bombay, and after a few hours there homewards on the ill-fated P. and O. steamship *Egypt*.

## CHAPTER L.

### BACK TO ENGLAND.

ON board the *Egypt*, except for Sir Thomas Smith, a level-headed, sagacious Scot, there was no one of particular interest, but there were many noisy, ill-disciplined children whose nurses kept gramophones whirling all day, which did not make for peace or quiet.

Sir Thomas had been one of the members of the Hunter Commission connected with the case of Brigadier-General Dyer, and he told me much of the evidence which was given at their meetings. According to him, the attitude of that officer was of one who regarded himself as the saviour of India. He had declined to be represented by counsel and, though the British members of the Commission were anxious, if possible, to exonerate him, that proved to be out of the question. Every effort to clear Dyer failed in face of two clever Indian barristers, who tore to shreds his attempts to justify what he had done.

When I reached home I met several friends and others who had clear views regarding the occurrences in the Jallianwalla garden at Amritsar. The subject was one which had aroused much controversy and opinions thereon seemed to be equally divided. Till I met Sir Thomas Smith my knowledge of the case was slight, but having many years earlier been called out in aid of the civil power I was aware of the difficulties which General Dyer had had to face and my sympathy as a soldier lay with him. I think in the circumstances that it will be best if I refrain from expressing my own opinion on the subject. Twenty-five years have passed since the disturbances in the Sikh capital. The responsibility of ruling a vast continent has changed hands, and I prefer to let sleeping dogs lie.

The voyage home on the *Egypt* was to be more fortunate than her next—and last. As we steamed along the coast of France I asked her commander, Captain Collyer, what he







Elizabeth, Countess Russell and General Haldane at  
Fancy Dress Ball, Cannes, 1934.

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feared most at sea. He promptly replied, "Fog," and he mentioned that where we then were there was at certain seasons of the year a chance of running into one. When a few weeks later he left Tilbury on the return voyage to Bombay he had on board 44 passengers and a crew which, with officers and lascars, who mainly formed it, numbered 291 souls. She carried also specie amounting to £1,058,879 sterling. All went well until 7 P.M. on the 20th May, when she ran into a dense fog some 25 miles south-west of Ushant, where a French freighter, the *Seine*, struck her amidships, and in twenty minutes she sank in 66 fathoms, losing 96 of the passengers and crew. For some years the *Egypt* remained in the public eye, but by the end of 1934—twelve years later—over a million pounds sterling had been recovered from the wreck through the skill and daring of Commendatore Giovanni Quaglia, backed by the splendid seamanship, technical knowledge, and fortitude of the Italians under him. The recovery of the specie was effected at a cost of only £200,000.

As regards Captain Collyer, whose presence of mind contributed largely to the fact that so many lives were saved, he was exonerated. I had seen a good deal of him during the voyage home, for he sometimes invited me to come on to the bridge, and I had not failed to notice, though I am no judge of the matter, what a careful seaman he seemed to be. I therefore wrote to my old friend, Sir Walter Lawrence, who had joined us at Gibraltar and who was a director of the P. and O. Steamship Company, and I believe that Collyer was given a shore billet, since he could no longer be employed at sea.

Some days after I arrived home I was bidden to present myself at the Colonial Office, and while waiting to see the Secretary of State I met Sir James Craig (later Lord Craigavon), who had also come for an interview and whom I met again when returning from Ceylon in 1939. When my turn came to see Churchill he thanked me several times for what I had done in Iraq, said that the Government were very grateful to me, and mentioned that I would receive the Grand Cross of St Michael and St George for my services in that country. It was, he said, a feat to have reduced the cost of holding Iraq in one year from thirty to ten millions, but I do not think that he realised the opposition I had had to overcome

in doing so. He added that I had shown statesmanlike qualities in carrying out the work and in having recognised the necessity for effecting the urgently required reductions.

I took the opportunity of pointing out that as I had completed the task that had been laid on me well within the four years for which my appointment would normally have lasted, I trusted that I would not be left in the cold but be further employed. In saying this I had in mind what he had written in 1920 when the Air Force control in Mesopotamia was about to be introduced. What he wrote was: "In the event of it being finally decided to place the control in Mesopotamia under the Air Force and your tenure of command coming to an end I should make every possible effort to find you another command equally suited to your rank and satisfactory to yourself," and he added that he had given directions for a record of this assurance to be kept at the War Office for future reference.

To my hint as to future employment he did not reply, but turned the subject and inquired how far I had taken a personal hand in the operations of 1920. Had he understood more regarding the actual state of affairs he would have appreciated the impossibility of my leaving Baghdad for an hour. The patience of Job would have been sorely tried had he suffered from the many alarms with which I was assailed and with which I alone was in a position to deal. I avoided telling him that it had never been my way to interfere with my subordinates when I knew they were to be trusted—though this meant the exercise of a good deal of self-restraint, and since my experience in the Ypres salient, where my corps commander kept fussing round during an action, I never yielded to the temptation to put my oar in where it was not wanted.

As I was about to leave the room he remarked that he and I had "at last brought off something together." I knew, of course, to what he referred; and on almost every occasion that we have met since he escaped from Pretoria that subject has been directly or indirectly introduced.

As I walked away from the Colonial Office it crossed my mind that the treatment I was to receive for my services in Iraq was not overflowing generous, for several of my contemporaries and juniors had been given the higher and more

military decoration of Grand Cross of the Bath or even some greater award, none of whom had a tithe of my active service or had been in chief command during a campaign. Indeed, in the case of several, that decoration had been conferred not for war service but because they were holding some staff or other appointment at home. But it is foolish to look a gift-horse in the mouth. Nothing had ever come to me easily, and perhaps it had been my fate to be born under an evil star.

The campaign which it had been my lot to conduct in Mesopotamia was overshadowed by the events of its immediate predecessor, the Great War. It was unquestionably unpopular, and there seemed to be a conspiracy to prevent any mention of it in the Press at home. When I arrived in London I was surprised to find, in spite of my despatches, which were not published until many months had passed, and the semi-official letters which I had addressed to Lord Peel, then Secretary of State for India, besides earlier ones to Winston Churchill in which full details were given of what was in progress, what ignorance prevailed of the more than serious situation through which we had passed in Mesopotamia. Even such well-informed men as my old friends, General Sir Edmund Barrow and Lord Peel, who held office in the Government and were in constant communication with me, must be included among the number of those who had little conception of the real state of affairs during the most trying six months through which I have ever passed. The latter presided at a lecture which I was invited to give at the Royal United Service Institution on the subject of the insurrection in Mesopotamia, and as I was leaving the hall both he and General Barrow remarked to me that they had no conception until they had heard my lecture of what had had to be done to avoid a catastrophic situation.

In further proof that things did not always go smoothly in the course of my career I should mention that three years later, when I was senior lieutenant-general, a vacancy occurred in the generals' list through the death in India of Lord Rawlinson. At this juncture I believed that if I took no steps to assert my claim for promotion, distasteful as it was to do so, there was good reason to suppose that I might be overlooked. I therefore, through the kind offices of Winston Churchill, was given an interview at the House of Commons

with the Secretary of State for War. I remarked that I had not had the honour of meeting him, though on my return from Mesopotamia I had reported myself at the War Office ; but I did not say that it had struck me that such a slight to a general officer on returning from a successful campaign must surely be unprecedented. To this he made no reply, but asked me what I wished, and I explained the position which had arisen through the untoward death of Lord Rawlinson. As at this time King George and Queen Mary were at sea on board the royal yacht and out of reach, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans informed me that it would be difficult to obtain consent for what I wanted. To this objection I stated that if he was prepared to support my solicitation there could be no difficulty and that I felt that I deserved some consideration for the way I had been treated. It would cost the State nothing, as I should have to retire in a few weeks through non-employment, and it would hardly be fair to inflict a snub on an officer who had served forty-three years in the Army. A day or two later I was informed that the King had approved of my promotion, and shortly after my name appeared in the 'London Gazette' as full general.

I ought to explain that at the time of my return from Iraq I was informed that I would not be further employed, and it was suggested that I might wish to retire from the Army. I, however, declined to do so, as I felt that I had not been fairly treated, and it was as well that I took that decision, though the prospects of a vacancy on the generals' list were slight.

The written promise that, should the Royal Air Force take over the command in Iraq, my interests should not be overlooked, had not been fulfilled, possibly because kings had arisen who knew not Joseph, for Churchill was no longer Secretary of State for War. Or it may have been that the work of pacifying Iraq and introducing the air scheme for that country was neither understood nor appreciated.

The campaign in Iraq was recognised as such by the first issue of the General Service Medal and two bars, and thereafter that decoration has been reserved for small wars in which the British Army is so often engaged.

To complete the story of the two previous years, I was commanded to present myself at Buckingham Palace on the

18th May 1922, where the King handed me the insignia of the G.C.M.G. His Majesty talked about our earlier meetings and also about the country which I had left a short time before, regarding which he was much better informed than some others in official positions whom I had met. A fortnight later I met Their Majesties at a dinner-party at Lord Middleton's house, when the Queen, with whom I had some conversation, remarked that the King had had an interesting talk with me on the day I had been at the palace.

I heard no more regarding employment, but in December when I was at Cologne, where I had been asked to come and lecture on the insurrection, I met Lord Derby, the Secretary of State for War, who told me that I was to be given no further employment. Thereafter I put the matter out of my mind as far as possible and occupied myself with other interests.

## CHAPTER LI.

### LATER YEARS.

ONE of the first things I did after arriving home was to make arrangements for the opening of the Sir John Moore memorial hall at Shorncliffe and the unveiling of the statue of the general, which would stand in front of it overlooking the ground where he must have watched the Light Brigade at its training more than a century earlier. I had managed to collect about £5500, which more than covered the cost of both, and it was arranged that the War Office would take over the building as a library and hall for lectures for the officers quartered there. H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, who was chairman of the committee, graciously consented to carry out the ceremony, and on the 6th July 1922 this took place.

On this occasion I made a rather lengthy speech, as I felt that it was desirable to explain to those present the genesis of the memorial; and in advance I sent a copy of what I proposed to say to the Duke's equerry. Among those present on Sir John Moore plain, as the ground in front of the memorial has been called since the days when the general commanded at Shorncliffe Camp, were the sculptor, John Tweed, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and many others. I had hoped that Miss Mary Carrick-Moore, a great-niece of the general, would have been able to attend, but owing to illness that was impossible. There was, however, present a lady, Miss Annie Rowan, who had a wonderful association with the hero of Corunna, for her father, two uncles, and a great-uncle had all served with him in the 52nd Light Infantry. It happened most appropriately that the 43rd Oxfordshire and Bucks Light Infantry of the old Light Brigade was stationed at Shorncliffe at this time, and a company of that regiment formed the guard of honour. That reminds me that His Royal

Highness, who was a pattern of correct procedure in military matters, pointed out to me that when he drew the cord whereby the bronze statue was visible to all present I had omitted to arrange for the guard of honour to present arms—a point which I regret to say I had overlooked.

Two and a half years later, on the 116th anniversary of the battle of Corunna, a letter from me appeared in 'The Times.' In this I stated that the brass field-gun, which I have earlier mentioned I had seen when I went to Spain some months before the Great War, had been acquired and was now in the Sir John Moore hall. At the time of my visit to that country I had failed to secure possession of it for reasons into which I need not enter, but after rather prolonged negotiations it was again in the land of its origin. Examination at the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich had shown that it must have been one of the field-pieces which had taken part in the retreat to the Spanish seaport. It had been in action in the battle and when the troops embarked for England it had been cast into the sea just outside the harbour. There it had lain for more than a century, and as it interfered with the nets of the local fishermen it had at length been salvaged, and in spite of its long immersion in the waters of the Atlantic it was in excellent preservation. At Woolwich a wooden carriage had been made for it, after which it was transported to the hall at Shorncliffe, where it now stands. Besides this interesting relic of the Peninsular War, Lord Biddulph presented an oil-painting which depicts the burial of the great general. The history of this picture is interesting. It appears that some time after the battle a local artist, named Ballard, was commissioned to record the burial scene in the citadel from a description given him by the clergyman who had conducted the funeral ceremony. The painting cannot be called a work of art of value, but as an imaginary representation of what took place in the early morning of the day on which the victors in the battle left Spain it is full of interest. It depicts the burial as taking place by the light of a "lanthorn dimly burning," as Wolfe states in his unforgettable lines—an anachronism, for it did not take place by artificial light—but in spite of that blemish it is an interesting relic of the occasion.

By this time my career in the Army had come to an end, and I turn to memories of a non-military nature. So long as



I was on full pay there were plenty of landmarks to stimulate recollection, such as stations where one was quartered, campaigns and so on, but had I not kept a diary I should have been at a loss to record what happened during the rather humdrum years that followed retirement.

Until the Second Great War I used to spend a month or more each winter with my friend, Miss Amy Paget, at Cannes. While there I met again after a gap of many years the authoress of 'Elizabeth and her German Garden,' and we became fast friends. Many a pleasant hour did I spend at her charming home in the hilly country behind that Riviera resort. She was wonderfully good company and did most of her literary work in the morning before the luncheon-hour, when she often entertained friends. One day I taxed her with having made her first husband, Count von Arnim, the hero of the one I liked best of her novels, 'The Caravanners,' but this she declined to admit. As at one time the wife of a German she was intimately acquainted with the Teutonic type, more especially the Prussians, she and I were in full agreement as to the folly of putting faith in that nation. One of her daughters married a German count—an anti-Nazi—to her regret, for the last thing she wished was that any of her children should ally themselves with Germans. I may mention that I had arranged to join her and one of her daughters, who had married an American, at Charleston, South Carolina, where she would pass the winter of 1940, but the Fates willed it otherwise, and she died there not long after the outbreak of war. As I happen to have kept a snapshot of her and myself taken at a ball at Cannes in February 1934, in which she looks surprisingly youthful though she was getting on in years, I reproduce it in these memoirs.

Although my hopes of further military employment had vanished I was by no means idle during the years that followed my return home from Iraq. For some time I had taken an interest in the Haldane family and had collected some notes regarding it; and having now plenty of leisure I decided to compile a history of my forebears, partly as an occupation but principally for the benefit of the younger members of the family. At first I had no intention of publishing it, but on the advice of Lord Haldane, who read part of the typescript, I was persuaded to do so.



St Paul's Cathedral—Annual Service on  
St Michael and St George's Day.

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I suspected that most of the necessary material would be found in Scotland, so I consulted my friend, Francis Grant, a distant kinsman, who was then the right-hand man of the Lyon King-of-Arms, an office which he was himself to hold a few years later. His advice was to come to Edinburgh, where he undertook to start me in the right direction. In April 1924, therefore, I went there and for two months worked in the office of the Lord Lyon, being helped by Mr Henry Paton, who, amongst other things, deciphered the old family charters and other documents which were beyond my power to read. By 1928 I had got together the necessary material, and the history, which was in embryo, was published in the following year. It was favourably reviewed, not that that was of consequence, for it was not expected to be a financial success and was mainly intended for the family. It was, however, satisfactory to know that the late Lord Tweedsmuir, whose opinion I valued, remarked of my literary effort that "it was a classic in family histories."

When my cousin was Lord High Chancellor in the Labour Government he told me that the Prime Minister, Mr Ramsay MacDonald, had asked him to arrange for me to have an interview with him on the subject of Iraq. This took place at 10 Downing Street in February 1924, when the conversation opened by the Prime Minister modestly saying that he knew little of Iraq, but that the subject of that country would shortly be raised in the House of Commons. I said that when I was told that I was to have an interview with him I naturally reflected on what he might wish to know. He responded with the single word, "Talk," which I proceeded to do. I ran through such questions as the quitting or continuing to hold the country, its value from a military and commercial point of view, and so on. I pointed out that, though there were some people who maintained that the Turks would be a thorn in our side, it must be remembered that when they once had relinquished their hold of a country—as was the case with Iraq—they were not in the habit of attempting to regain it. So far as the British were concerned the important thing would be to show no sign of weakness, to lay down what we intended to do, and adhere strictly to what we said. Lastly, we must remain in the country till the Arabs were fit to take over the government.

After I had said my say and had been asked and answered a few questions the Prime Minister began relating his own experiences in the Middle East, and I was surprised to learn how much he had travelled. Amongst other places, he had visited Tabriz and had nearly been arrested in Asia Minor by the Bolsheviks. I made some remarks on the disappointing results of our rule in India and Egypt and how devoid of gratitude people were for all we had done for them and the vast sums we had spent for their benefit. I then went on to say that though there were many who disputed the contention that force was the dominating principle, more especially in the East, it was nevertheless so. He said that he imputed the fact that all was not well in those Eastern countries to the circumstance that officials no longer, as in earlier days, spent their lives where their work was, but frequently went home on leave. In fact, as he put it, their sympathies were packed in their suitcases, their hearts were in the Highlands, and they stayed in their offices and did not go among the people. On the last point I was in full agreement, for it was one that had come under my notice in India and Iraq. In the latter country it was observable that Sir Percy Cox remained glued to his office, as I have already mentioned, but on the North-West Frontier of India, which I knew well and where I had been thirty years earlier, there were political officers, such as my old friend Roos-Keppel, who were constantly on the move among the natives. My impression at the termination of my interview with Mr Ramsay MacDonald was that he was a kindly, sympathetic sort of man, and his last words were to thank me for an interesting talk.

Although I have no record of the date, it must have been about this time that I received a communication from one of the editors of 'British Documents on the Origin of the 1914-18 War,' which the Foreign Office was compiling. To the best of my recollection this was as follows. Among captured German documents there had been discovered a letter from Captain Ostertag, who had been military attaché at the German embassy in London. This was a covering letter to one to me from Major-General Charles Townshend, and I was asked to explain how this had come about. In Ostertag's letter he said that though he was not sure that the "Haldane" mentioned in the letter was the Secretary of State for War or Colonel

Haldane, it was probably the latter, as Lord Haldane knew nothing about strategy. The letter in question gave a précis of the French plans should there be an outbreak of war between France and Germany, and indicated that there would be an attack against the western frontier of the latter country.

When I read Townshend's letter, the contents of which were based on information given him when he was military attaché at Paris by Commandant Mordacq, well known as an author and member of the French General Staff, I remembered having received it, and the writer had probably hoped that I would pass it on to the then Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Nicholson. Townshend was an ambitious officer and no doubt thought to profit by bringing himself to the general's notice. I handed the letter to the general, and as it was not the first that had come from the same quarter he remarked, "What am I to do with it?" I cannot remember what I replied, but the general probably tore it up and threw the scraps into his wastepaper basket. As the German military attaché probably had a charwoman in his pay, the fragments of the letter would eventually find their way to Germany, where they were found at the end of the war. I wrote this explanation to the editor and that was the last I heard of the matter. Some officers at the War Office were careless regarding secret and confidential papers, but when I was in the Intelligence Branch I was one of those who not only typed secret letters, but daily, before leaving my office, burned waste and blotting paper, so that no information that could be useful to a foreign country should emanate from my room.

On the 25th March of the following year, while staying with my cousin at Cloan, on the occasion of my aunt's hundredth birthday, she remarked that it had been a "mental effort" to live so long, and this she had shown a few weeks earlier when she had had a struggle to defy the "last enemy." It was either then or the year before that she referred to her son's treatment during the Great War. The latter never mentioned that subject when talking to me, but his mother indignantly remarked that Mr Asquith had "thrown him into the gutter." I imagine that that is a fairly correct description of what he did, for Haldane and he had been close friends for many years. Six months later my aunt died, and at her funeral there were present eleven of my name—sons, grand-

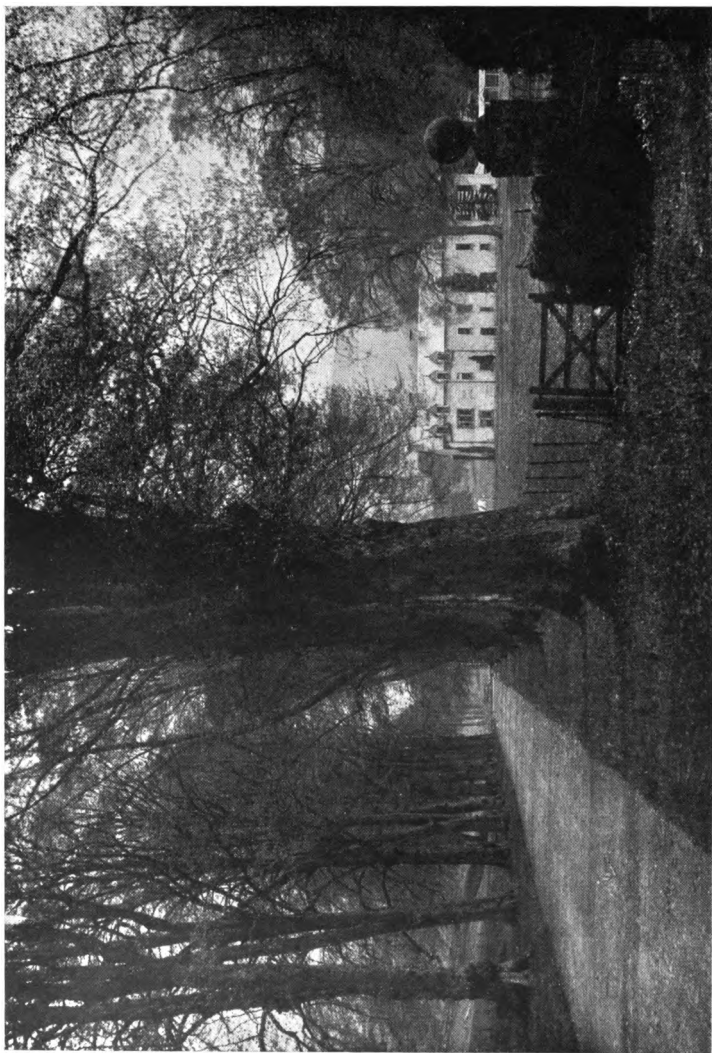
sons, nephews, and great-nephews—besides many of my relations on the distaff side.

I had nearly finished writing my book on the family when Lord Newton asked me to join him, his wife, and Miss Lilian Hanbury-Williams on a tour to the West Indies. I was anxious to go to Jamaica, where my great-great-grandfather, Colonel James Haldane of the Life Guards and later commanding Guise's Regiment—now the Royal Warwickshire Regiment—Brigadier-General George Haldane, 3rd Foot Guards, Captain-General of the island, and another nephew had all died. I had been in correspondence with the late Mr Frank Cundall, Secretary of the Institute of Jamaica, on matters connected with those kinsmen of mine, and he had suggested that I should put in the parish church of St Andrew's a tablet to their memory.

The ship which took us to the West Indies was the *Pèlerin de la Touche*, which we boarded at Plymouth, and we arrived at Guadeloupe on the 17th January 1927, an island which possessed interest to me, for George Haldane had taken part in an expedition to capture it on his way to take up the Governorship of Jamaica. I left my party at Colon, and after visiting Costa Rica reached Kingston, where the tablet which I have mentioned had arrived; and before I left for home it was placed in the church. After spending a few days on the island, one of the forts on which bears the name of Haldane, I sailed on a fruit-boat which carried a heavy cargo of bananas and grape-fruit.

When I got home I turned my attention to another project. The old family property of Gleneagles had always possessed interest for me, it having descended from father to son without a break from the thirteenth century, and as I had saved a certain sum during the Great War and in Iraq I undertook to restore the little that remained of the castle and the ancient chapel. In the latter I arranged to have placed a tablet to those members of the family who had lost their lives in war since 1800, and another to those who had fought or died in the field from Bannockburn onwards.

Some years later my old friend, Lord Newton, suggested that I should join him in a visit to Ceylon, where the 1st Battalion of my regiment had been quartered many years earlier and where one of my cousins had owned a coffee planta-



Gleneagles—The Lime Avenue.

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tion. I was staying at Cannes at this time and joined him and his unmarried daughter at Toulon a couple of days before Christmas 1938. The island of spices was an attractive place, more especially in the uplands away from the coast, but some of the hotels were distinctly behind the times as regards sanitary arrangements. After spending about a fortnight on the island we sailed for home, but on the way I stopped with my friends near Cannes.

In the following summer, when rumours of war were rife, after passing some weeks at Le Zoute on the Belgian coast I went to France with friends, and while there, on the British ambassador's recommendation that visitors would be well advised to return home, I did so, reaching London a few days before war was declared on Germany.

As I was very fit, though well beyond the regulation age for military service, I made great efforts to get employment, but all that was then possible was to become an air-raid warden in Paddington. A little later I joined the board of the Empire Societies War Hospitality Committee, the chairman of which was Field-Marshal Lord Milne. I became head of the appeal committee and was instrumental in raising several thousand pounds.

At the same time, thanks to the adjutant-general, Lieut.-General Sir Robert Gordon-Finlayson, who had served with me in the 3rd Division in 1914-15, I was appointed to be president of one of the boards of officers which dealt with ex-officers and civilians who had volunteered for service and who had to be thoroughly examined and medically tested before they could be recommended as suitable for commissions in the Forces. This work continued till the 15th February 1940, and the board with which I was associated disposed of more than a thousand applicants. Among them there were some fine types of men yearning to fight the Germans in any capacity. Many of them were fit and had served with distinction during the 1914-18 war, and these would have been valuable in helping to instil discipline—the absence of which was noticeable not only in the dress but in the behaviour of the soldiers of that period—into the men of the new conscript army. But youth and not experience were now regarded by the Army Council as the principal requisites for the soldier who was to fight the Germans,

and representations which I made on the subject were ineffectual.

I was still living in London with my sister at the time when the bombing began, and the Paddington district in which we lived, being near the terminus of the Great Western Railway, received a good deal of attention. My duty as an air-raid warden took me out on most nights of the week, which was preferable to remaining static indoors with bombs crashing down in the vicinity. The nights were now so disturbed that, though nothing perturbed my sister, I felt it was not fair either to her or my servants to prolong the strain. We moved, therefore, to friends in Camberley, where I continued my activities in connection with air-raids, of which we had several—some unpleasantly close—but eventually returned to London some time before the later pattern of German missiles began to arrive. At 107 Westbourne Terrace, where I now lived, their oncoming was not infrequent, and one incendiary bomb penetrated the roof of my house, several others falling on and penetrating the pavements outside. As I had been an air-raid warden for the stipulated period, though many years beyond the regulation age, I was informed that I was entitled to the Defence Medal. It was earned for service at home and not in the field, where I had gained earlier decorations; but I think that in some ways it was more deserved than they were, for to sit night after night never knowing when the bomb might arrive that would mangle or bury one alive was more unpleasant than service in the field.

There is little left to record concerning myself, and the moment has come to bring to a conclusion these memoirs of eighty years. At the stage to which I have arrived life consists of little more than memories, and each year leaves fewer and fewer with whom to share them. These years have brought with them the loss of my dearest friends; but that of my sister Alice—whom I have occasionally mentioned in these pages, and with whom since my return home from Iraq in 1922 I lived, and lived most happily—was the greatest blow of all. This was soon to be followed by the death of my two remaining sisters. I can wish no better fate to anyone than to be spared from the infliction of loneliness, more especially when that condition is haunted by the consciousness that, had the course of life been more wisely followed, it might

have been avoided. But it is vain to yield to regrets—everyone, as the old Latin tag reminds us, does not get to Corinth. The writer of these memoirs is well aware that he has allowed opportunities to slip by which he would have done better to grasp, and he is conscious of many sins of omission as also of commission. Luck has not always been favourable, and there have been times when the rebuffs of the blind goddess have had to be accepted with resignation. Long before his day Haldanes had learned that the path of life is more often strewn with thorns than roses, for otherwise they would not have adopted as the family motto at the head of their escutcheon the single, somewhat enigmatic, word, SUFFER, the origin of which I have failed to discover.

In a chapter on the heredity of the Haldane family which my cousin, Professor John Scott Haldane, was good enough to contribute to its history, he referred to this motto and gave his opinion that the word conveyed an injunction to endure. Besides the writer of these memoirs other members of his generation have learned the truth of the maxim and have had occasion to display the virtue of endurance, and while doing so to prove that “to bear is to conquer our fate.”



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